DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – A

Marie-Anne Mancio

Accidentally on Purpose: The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes, Towards A Retrospective

Active Circles

Additive

Anita Urquhart

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Architecture

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Art Room

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Ascent of the Stedelijk

Ascham Street, no. 11, London, NW5

Audiences

Anti-Gravity

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

A

Marie-Anne Mancio

“Accidentally on Purpose: The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes, Towards A Retrospective”

Unpublished paper by Jason E Bowman and Marie-Anne Mancio, PSI 15 Conference, Zagreb, June 2009

See also: Introduction

Active Circles

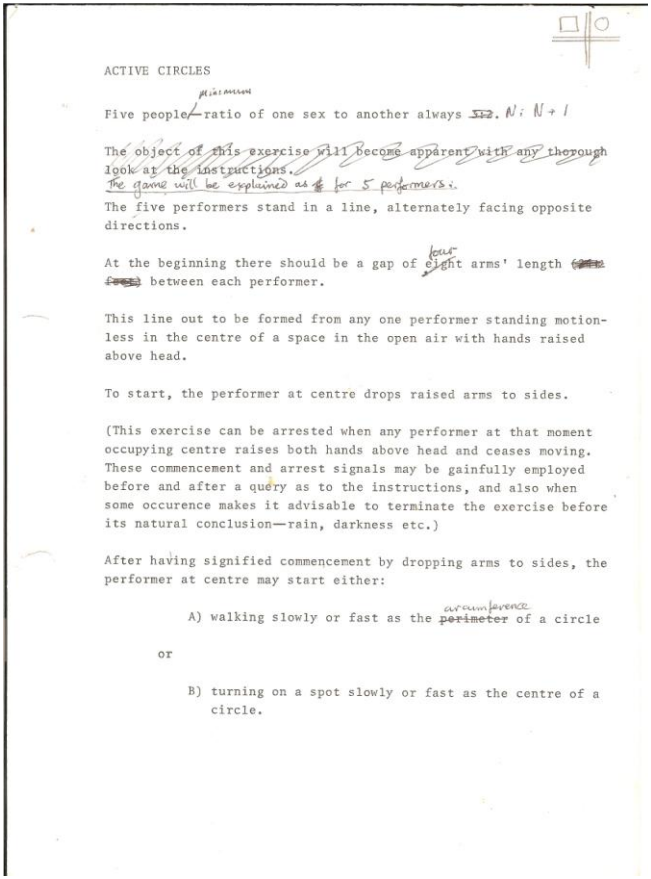
Appears amongst papers for *The Street* (1975) and again in August 1976 when it was performed in Hartley Wintney.



Below: Outside the cricket pavilion on Hartley Wintney village green after performing a “rain dance” – *Active Circles* (see Englishness)



Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes



ACTIVE CIRCLES

Five people ~~—~~ minimum ratio of one sex to another always ~~5:2~~. N: N+1

The object of this exercise will become apparent with any thorough look at the instructions.
~~The game will be explained as it is~~ for 5 performers.

The five performers stand in a line, alternately facing opposite directions.

At the beginning there should be a gap of four eight arms' length ~~(one foot)~~ between each performer.

This line out to be formed from any one performer standing motionless in the centre of a space in the open air with hands raised above head.

To start, the performer at centre drops raised arms to sides.

(This exercise can be arrested when any performer at that moment occupying centre raises both hands above head and ceases moving. These commencement and arrest signals may be gainfully employed before and after a query as to the instructions, and also when some occurence makes it advisable to terminate the exercise before its natural conclusion—rain, darkness etc.)

After having signified commencement by dropping arms to sides, the performer at centre may start either:

A) walking slowly or fast as the ~~perimeter~~ circumference of a circle

or

B) turning on a spot slowly or fast as the centre of a circle.

Draft notes for *Active Circles*, nd, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive.

Anthony Howell went on to perform a version of this work in Australia. See "Lake Goongarrie Becomes A Stage" in *The Kalgoorlie Miner* 10th June 1982

Additive

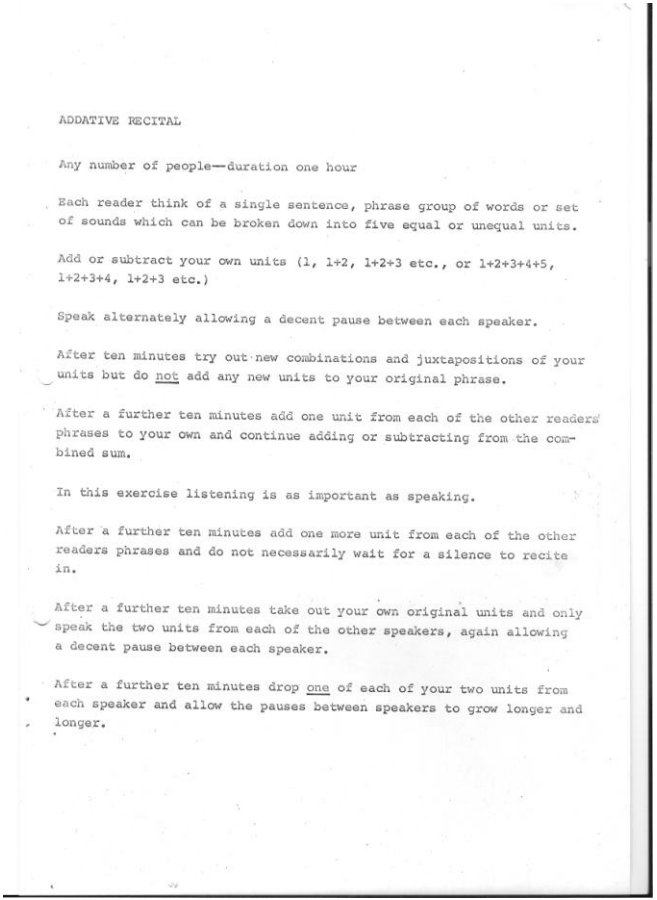
See *Solos (Set 1) with Accumulating Costume Rule*, *Three Act Piece*, *Two Journeys*, *Rape of the Mind*, Waterfall, and so on



Village Green, Hartley Wintney:
SOLOS (SET 1), with ACCUMULATING COSTUME RULE

Lindsay Moran performs *Solos*. Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes

The use of additive and subtractive structures runs throughout The Theatre of Mistakes' works and parallels developments in some minimalist or process music compositions which: "start with a basic repeated pattern and add on in one of two ways. Either the pattern would be lengthened by adding additional notes or measures or phrases in usually a 1, 1+2, 1+2+3, 1+2+3+4 kind of way(Music in Fifths; Frederic Rzewski's Les Moutons des Panurge, Attica, and Coming Together; and later Carl Stone's electronic Shing Kee); by slowing down existing patterns(Music for Mallet Instruments, Voice, and Organ)or else a certain recurring duration would begin with silence and add notes with each recurrence"
(Kyle Gann, "Thankless Attempts at a Definition of Minimalism", *New Music Box*, Nov 2001)



ADDATIVE RECITAL

Any number of people—duration one hour

Each reader think of a single sentence, phrase group of words or set of sounds which can be broken down into five equal or unequal units.

Add or subtract your own units (1, 1+2, 1+2+3 etc., or 1+2+3+4+5, 1+2+3+4, 1+2+3 etc.)

Speak alternately allowing a decent pause between each speaker.

After ten minutes try out new combinations and juxtapositions of your units but do not add any new units to your original phrase.

After a further ten minutes add one unit from each of the other readers phrases to your own and continue adding or subtracting from the combined sum.

In this exercise listening is as important as speaking.

After a further ten minutes add one more unit from each of the other readers phrases and do not necessarily wait for a silence to recite in.

After a further ten minutes take out your own original units and only speak the two units from each of the other speakers, again allowing a decent pause between each speaker.

After a further ten minutes drop one of each of your two units from each speaker and allow the pauses between speakers to grow longer and longer.

Exercise from loose leaf manuscript of *Preparations for Displacement*, 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive. ©The Theatre of Mistakes

See also Mathematics, the music of Phillip Glass, Michael Nyman, Poetry

Anita Urquhart, see **Urquhart, Anita**

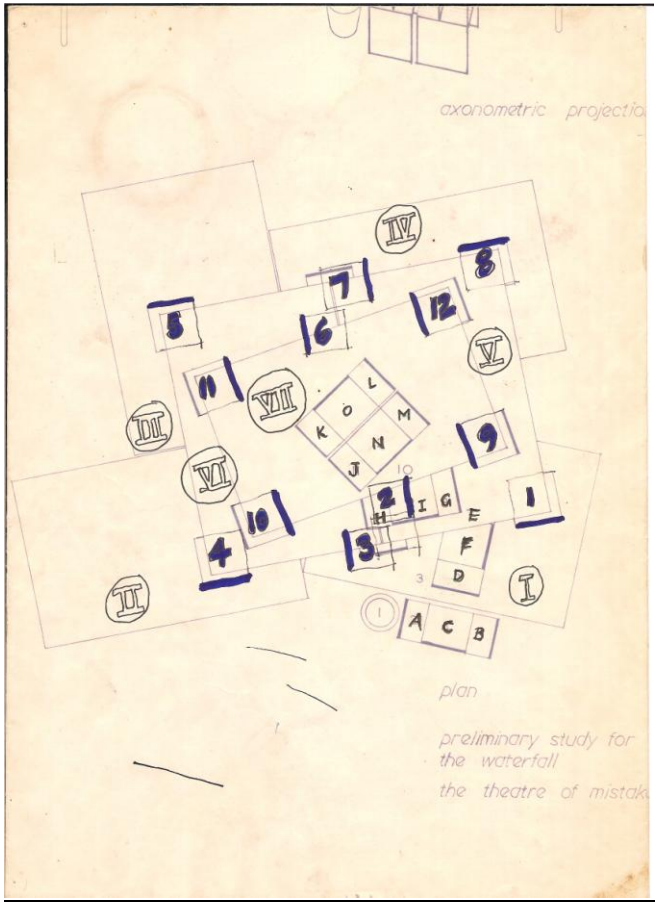
Anthropology

Early participants of Ting, Signe Lie Howell and Christina Toren are now both Professors of Anthropology. Dr. Gwendolyn Leick is also an anthropologist (with a specialism is Assyriology). As of July 2009, none have written on Ting/The Theatre of Mistakes. With its intricate behavioural patterns (which Jason E Bowman considers 'cultish'), complex psychologies, and shifts in collective identity, against the changing socio-political landscape of 1970s Britain, Ting would be fertile ground for analysis.
See also: Unwritten

Architecture

The mathematically-inspired structures of performances, the contributions of architect Peter Stickland, the precise diagrams, the investigations of spatial practice, the infiltration into public spaces, the creation of micro-spaces through the deployment of grids all point to the relevance of an architectural reading of The Theatre of Mistakes' practice. (See also: Mathematics, Unwritten)

Meanwhile, 1970s architecture itself is being reappraised:
http://www.c20society.org.uk/docs/campaigns/70s.html



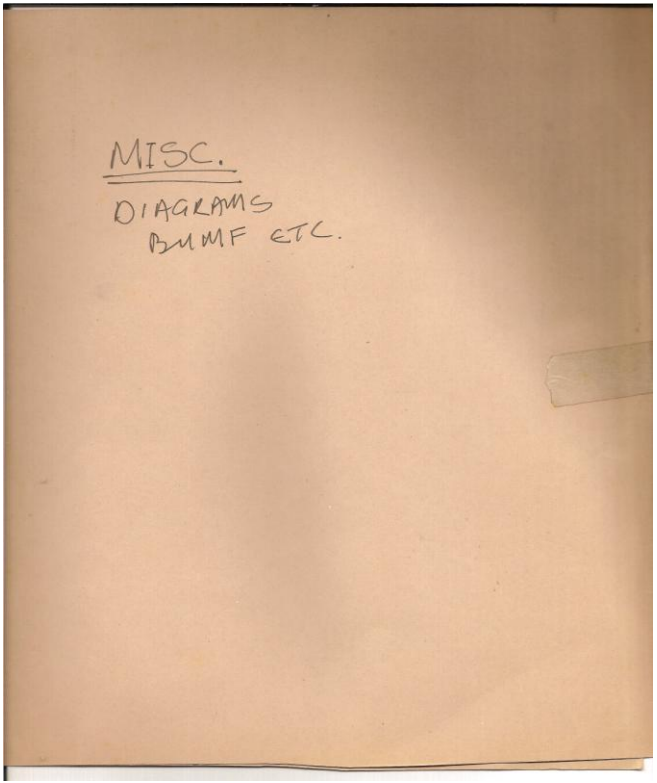
Preliminary Study for *The Waterfall* (1977) by Peter Stickland
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Archive of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

"From damp lock-ups, filing cabinets, print cabinets and files of negatives held in the homes of multiple photographers, writers and artists to the archives of the Serpentine Gallery (London), Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), Paris Biennale, Indiana University (Bloomington), Hayward Gallery (London) Paula Cooper Gallery (New York) and *The Guardian* newspaper, amidst others many others [Marie-Anne] Mancio and [Jason E.] Bowman rescued or exhumed, catalogued and archived thousands of pieces of material including: correspondence, publications, scripts, sketchbooks, publicity materials, photographic negatives, videos, Polaroid and other photographs, manuscripts, diagrams, manifestos, notations, critical writing and original artworks[1]."
(JE Bowman in JE Bowman and M-A Mancio "Accidentally on Purpose: The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes, Towards A Retrospective" unpublished paper, PSI 15, Zagreb, June 2009)

The archive is the property of The Theatre of Mistakes and is currently unavailable for public viewing. It is hoped its contents will form the basis of forthcoming exhibitions.
See also: Bibliography

[1] Unlike many of their peers The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes was conscientious in ensuring their works were documented and records maintained. However, on their disbandment materials were scattered. The majority of the material is in excellent to good condition. Photographic re-prints from negatives of specific works/projects are possible. JE Bowman



One of the original folders in which The Theatre of Mistakes Archive was stored. There were several discussions between myself, Jason E Bowman, and Anthony Howell about the retrograde tendency to fetishise the object, (whether through taking delight in 1970s typeface or wanting to retain every typographical error.) Guilty of this romanticism – admittedly a contradiction for a writer/proof-reader with a pedantic tendency to complain about the misuse of apostrophes and other such aberrations – I remain convinced that the mistake should be preserved.

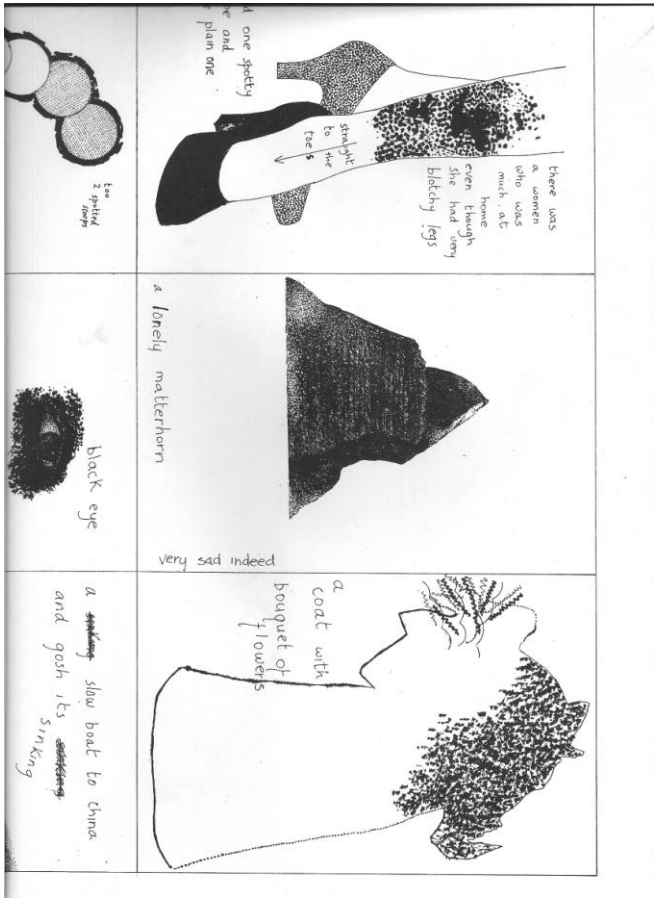
Art Room (22 Avenue Rd, London NW3/ Ascham St)
See also: Chance, Susan Bonvin, Marc Chaimowicz, Susan Hiller, Manifesto of Mutual Art, Ed Meeneley, Lindsay Moran

The Art Room was a project inspired by the "MANIFESTO OF MUTUAL ART"—which was distributed among friends, mainly writers, artists and philosophers, in December 1975 by myself, Michael Greenall, Lindsay Moran and Fiona Templeton, who were all working with the Theatre of Mistakes at that time. The manifesto itself evolved out of attempts to resolve differences which the company had encountered while mounting large scale and small scale collaborative art ventures during the earlier part of the year. One conclusion we had come to was that it was easier for artists to sell the work of friends than to sell their own work. The Art Room was set up in order to test this idea, and to provide a sort of clearing house where gallery owners could see the work of artists they might be interested in showing without risking the difficulties of a confrontation with the artist in his or her studio.

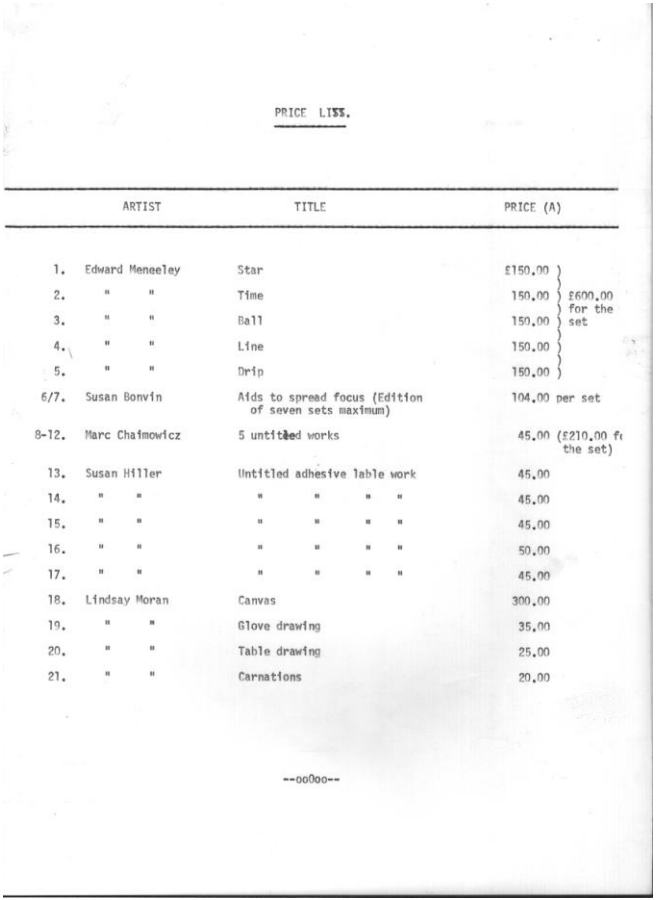
Three exhibitions were mounted: one at The Ananda Centre, 22 Avenue Road, NW8—courtesy of Mr Leslie Elliot—and two at 11 Ascham Street, NW5. There were five artists in the first show: Susan Bonvin, Marc Chaimowicz, Susan Hiller, Edward Meneeley and Lindsay Moran—these artists having been selected by chance according to the method suggested by the manifesto, from a short list of artists we all admired. At one of the gatherings of those invited to see the exhibition I gave a talk on these five artists. However gauche this may appear, in some ways, it did help to emphasise that looking at art was the reason for the gathering, and it helped to allay the doubts of those who claimed not to understand the work. Prices were low, since the contract ensured that work would sell at the artists' price, and about ten works were sold.

The second exhibition was a one person show by Lindsay Moran. During this show there were weekly performances and readings at The Art Room on Friday nights. On the first of these evenings, Reindeer Werk performed, the following week David Plante gave a reading from his latest novel, and on the last Friday Jackie Lansley gave a lecture demonstration. The attendance at these events increased as news spread along the grapevine. This show also sold well.

Press release by Anthony Howell for The Art Room, nd, c. 1976, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Section of poster for Lindsay Moran's solo show at the Art Room *Some Matterhorns*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



PRICE LISS.

	ARTIST	TITLE	PRICE (A)
1.	Edward Meneeley	Star	£150.00)
2.	" "	Time	150.00) £600.00
3.	" "	Ball	150.00) for the set
4.	" "	Line	150.00)
5.	" "	Drip	150.00)
6/7.	Susan Bonvin	Aids to spread focus (Edition of seven sets maximum)	104.00 per set
8-12.	Marc Chaimowicz	5 untitled works	45.00 (£210.00 f the set)
13.	Susan Hiller	Untitled adhesive lable work	45.00
14.	" "	" " " "	45.00
15.	" "	" " " "	45.00
16.	" "	" " " "	50.00
17.	" "	" " " "	45.00
18.	Lindsay Moran	Canvas	300.00
19.	" "	Glove drawing	35.00
20.	" "	Table drawing	25.00
21.	" "	Carnations	20.00

--ooOoo--

Price List for The Art Room, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Art Schools

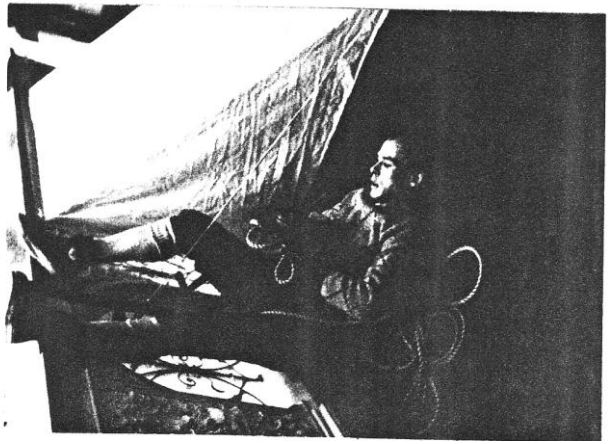
"British art schools in the Seventies were inspirational, their doors always open to visionary misfits and would-be rock stars. Unsurprisingly, it was among art students that punk first reared its nightmarish head. Nowadays, after Thatcherite "reforms", genuinely radical students are vastly outnumbered by fee-paying time-servers."
(Alix Sharkey, "The Seventies" *Independent* 21st October 1998)

As well as providing The Theatre of Mistakes with audiences, these art colleges were fertile grounds for recruiting performers.
Edinburgh: 1976 Fiona Templeton invited Lindsay Moran to join The Theatre of Mistakes; Feb 1977 *Going* performed there
Goldsmiths: *Three Act Piece* performed in Feb 1976; open rehearsals for *Table Piece* June 1976

"**Hornsey** was an amazing place to be at that time."
Pat Murphy in response to Questionnaire, December 2008
Julian Maynard Smith was a student at Hornsey

Maidstone: Michael Greenall studied then lectured here; Miranda Payne was a student as was Howard Tong (see Workshops)
Elements of Performance Art (3 performers) in June 1976
Slade, University College London: Glenys Johnson studied here from 1974-77; *Two Journeys, Pairs Game* performed in May 1976
Southampton: *Pairs Game,* July 1975
Winchester: March 1976 *Elements of Performance Art (*15 performers)
Further reading:
John A. Walker "Radical Artists & Art Students versus Management & Bureaucracy during the 1970s," *Journal of Art and Design Education* Vol. 20, no. 2, 2001, 230-237

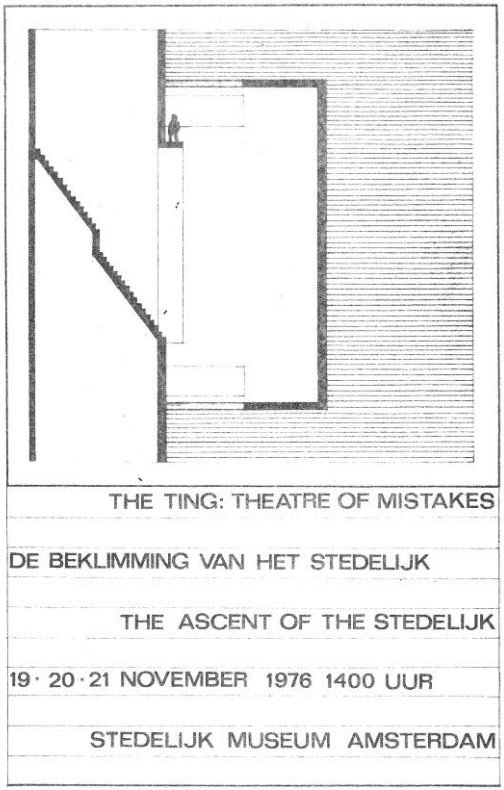
Ascent of the Stedelijk (Stedelijk, Amsterdam, 19th-21st Nov, 1976)
Like *The Street*, this was a site-specific work that took the museum's architecture as its conceptual starting point. The Stedelijk's contemporary art program was an attraction for artists in the 70s, just as it had been for American artists post-1945 who staged their first European exhibitions there.



Ascent of the Stedelijk ©The Theatre of Mistakes

See also: Disappearances

Ascham Street, no. 11, London, NW5
Home of Anthony Howell and Signe Lie Howell. Venue for *The Street* and other Ting events.



Program for *Ascent of the Stedelijk* (b/w copy),
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Assumption:

The Stedelijk Museum has been turned on its side (through 90 degrees).

Problem:

Given this assumption, the balcony on the first floor constitutes a stiff climb: two vertical faces leading up to a narrow horizontal ledge.

Planning:

The Company has prepared diagrams (in plan and in cross-section) by which to decide on their strategy for climbing to this ledge and have collected the equipment necessary for the task. Much of this material will either be employed during the performance or displayed at the time of the performance.

Performance:

Acting within the constraints of anti-gravity (where floors become walls and walls become floors), the company will attempt to scale one face of the balcony, erect a tent on the ledge and leave on the ledge a canister "sealed for posterity" containing mementos of the achievement. They will then descend by the other face of the balcony.

Reason:

The mountaineer Mallory suggested that one attempted to climb a mountain "because it was there". One reason for performing a horizontal climb is so that the audience can watch mountain climbing close up—without becoming mountaineers themselves. The same effect might be achieved in the Himalayas if Mount Everest could be turned on its side.

Extract from Program for *Ascent of the Stedelijk* (reverse, b/w copy) detailing the work's premise. The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Audiences

Who saw? Who knew? Who participated?

"We believe in the personal autonomy of each individual's creative act, in the actuality of art as a physical rather than a referential or illustrative experience, and in maintaining a state of constant enquiry into the visibility of the presence of a passive audience in a completely ceremonial situation"

(An early flyer for Ting nd. c.1974, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)



The Ting dance at Purdies farm in 1974. The audience mostly comprised other artists. Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes

"The cows were watching; the horses were watching; Deborah was watching"

(Interview: Victoria Chick, London, 4th Nov 2008)

Victoria Chick recalls that even before *The Street*, Anthony Howell and Signe Lie Howell would stage events or exercises outside their house on Ascham Street:

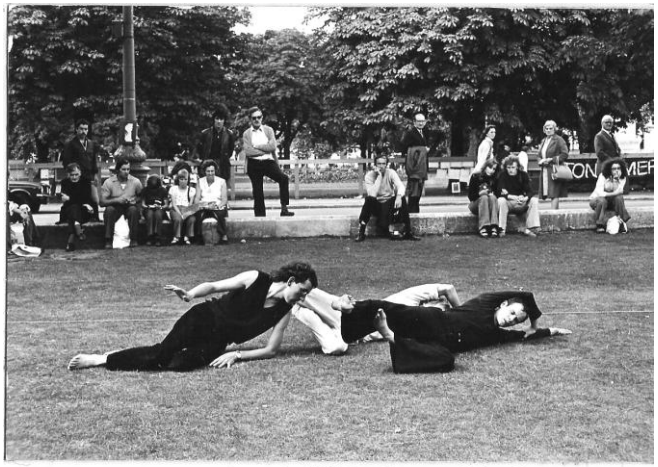
"And the reaction was of course complete bafflement and some amusement. No-one hung around very long. It wasn't an area of much traffic either, and so there wasn't much of an audience."
(Interview: London, 4th Nov 2008)







Audiences for *The Street* (1975) were also participants
Photographs ©The Theatre of Mistakes



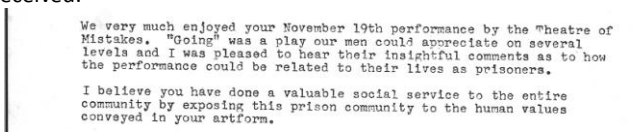
Southampton Performance Show,July 1975;Performance:Pairs Game.
Photo: Geoff Howard

On Sunday I watched Anthony Howell's Theatre of Mistakes in a piece called "Going," a play built around half a dozen sentences and postures intricately and symmetrically varied. Two burly Americans stormed into the box office afterwards demanding their money back: "I've seen some crap in Cambridge but really . . .", while the next person to come in, a Benedictine monk and concrete poet, declared it "the finest thing in Europe at the moment." It was that sort of play, that sort of festival.

(Sebastian Faulks "Gift of Tongues" *The Sunday Times* 24th April 1977)

"I remember in October 1976 a Sunday afternoon performance at the Serpentine gallery by the Ting, Theatre of Mistakes. Enacted in silence, *Scenes at a Table* [*Homage to Pietro Longhi*] at first seemed like a meaningless game controlled by arbitrary rules. Started by an instigator chosen by the throw of a dice, an action was carried out on tiptoe until the discomfort became unbearable. The performer then 'swooned', only to be replaced by another. After a while, though, this mesmerizing exercise began to resemble normal social intercourse, in which people's allotted roles are performed according to agreed roles of conduct – and therefore, to make horrible sense; but other members of the audience didn't see it that way.
Located in Hyde Park, at weekends the Serpentine attracts large numbers of casual visitors who rarely go to galleries; that Sunday the audience was impatient. The performers managed to incorporate into the show comments such as 'Silly' and 'What is it supposed to mean?'. Things were brought to an abrupt conclusion, though, by a man rushing onto the set yelling, 'I'm sick of watching you, you pretentious creeps. I suppose you think this is a contribution to theatre?'"
(Sarah Kent "Groundswell" in Kerr, Joe; Gibson, Andrew and Seaborne, Mike (eds) *London from Punk to Blair*, Reaktion, 2003, 341-2)

Yet a 1978 performance of *Going* at the Western Pittsburgh Penitentiary with an audience of prisoners was extremely well received:



We very much enjoyed your November 19th performance by the Theatre of Mistakes. "Going" was a play our men could appreciate on several levels and I was pleased to hear their insightful comments as to how the performance could be related to their lives as prisoners.

I believe you have done a valuable social service to the entire community by exposing this prison community to the human values conveyed in your artform.

Letter from Paul A Rolin, Academy of Prison Arts Co-Ordinator Nov 1978



Scenes at a Table: Homage to Pietro Longhi, Serpentine (October, 1976)
Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes/Caroline Wilkinson

"sixty of them [prisoners] showed up and, literally, sat riveted to their seats throughout the performance. They gave the company a standing ovation at the end, talked with the actors an hour after" (Donna Lange "Prisoners Enjoy London Group" *Tribune Review* 10th Dec 1978)

Peter Stickland:
For the 1977 Silver Jubilee, The Theatre of Mistakes made a version of *Waterfall* on the village green at Hartley Wintney. People threw apple cores….



Press photo: ©Southern Arts Theatre of Mistakes *Waterfall 12*, Hartley Wintney Green, June 1977

Letter in The Theatre of Mistakes Archive dated 16th August, 1977 from Anthony Howell to the BBC re the treatment of The Theatre of Mistakes in Fyfe Robertson's programme 'Robbie' which aired the previous night on BBC1 at 8.30pm:

4) Further, Mr Robertson states "The only reaction I can find among these spectators apart from boredom is embarrassment, they're sorry for these people." When, how and where did Mr Robertson get this opinion from spectators? He was filming from the roof at the time, and could only have seen the tops of their heads. During the private view he did not venture onto the sculpture court where the performance was taking place, nor has he been there during any public performances. His opinion of the reaction of spectators is absolutely contradictory to our own evidence— on the whole we have been congratulated. The only time he watched, even for a few minutes, was during a private rehearsal for a performance due to be put on 12 days from that date—rehearsals for a conventional play that much ahead might not have got beyond a reading of the script. For the few minutes he was doing his camera statement from the roof—a considerable distance away from the actual performance at the private view—he had his back towards us.

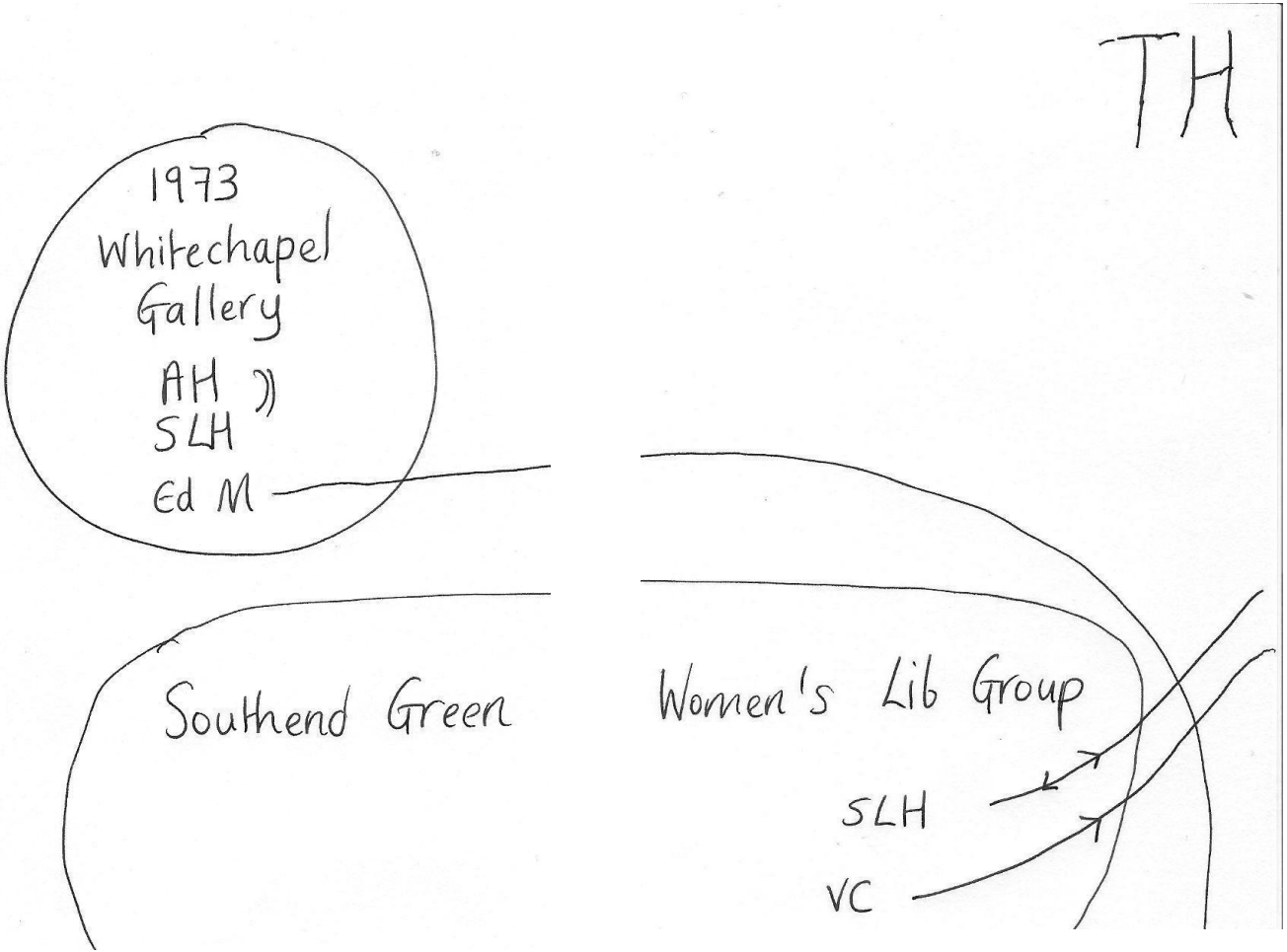
Reviewing *A Waterfall* at the 1977 Hayward Annual, David Cunningham notes:

"An office block overlooks the part of the Hayward which the Theatre used. When I looked during office hours, there were definitely some people watching"

(David Cunningham "The Theatre of Mistakes at the Hayward Gallery" *Musics* 14 1977)

See also: Art Schools, Critics, *Preparations for Displacement,* John Welch

Anti-Gravity (Sept 1975) see **Gravity**


TH
1973
Whitechapel
Gallery
AH
SLH
Ed M
Southend Green
Women's Lib Group
SLH
VC

2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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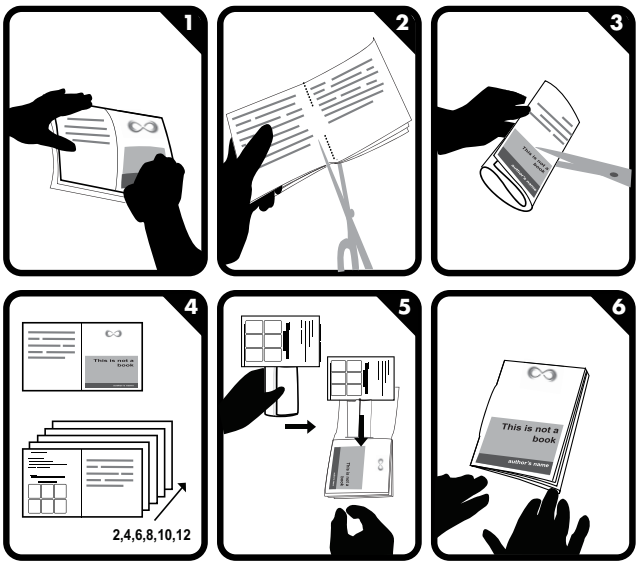


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – B

Marie-Anne Mancio

Ballet

Birth Ballet Chorale
Ballet for Cars

Bibliography

Blind

Bonvin, Susan

Bowman, Jason E.

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

B

Marie-Anne Mancio

Ballet

"After a long training [1962-5], I danced for a while [1966] with the Royal Ballet. The Royal Opera House was an exceptionally privileged space, for a performer, but being in the corps-de-ballet felt more like being enlisted in the army than it felt like play. I became a writer, playing with words, you might say, then a performance artist. Perhaps a Kleinian past influenced my choice of careers, and contributes even now to my notions concerning the essence of performance. At the same time, the discipline of the ballet was important. Disciplined play is my ideal, for these contradictory terms are not necessarily in conflict."
(Anthony Howell, *The Analysis of Performance*, Routledge, 1999, 197)

"I can remember a phrase I used to use – that the exercises might be so difficult that a ballet dancer would find them very hard to perform."
(Anthony Howell in Nick Kaye's *Art Into Theatre*, Harwood Academic, Amsterdam, 1996, 132)

Howard Tong recalls ballet dancers who attended Ting workshops but could not stand still.
(Conversation: Howard Tong, London, October, 2008)

Birth Ballet Chorale (Wednesday July 3rd 1974, Janz Studio, The Dairy presented by Softly, Loudly).

See also: Vicki Chick, David Coxhead, Carlyle Reedy, *Scape*, Amikam Toren



Birth Ballet Chorale (Ballet for Pregnant Ladies)
Photos: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Interview with Anthony Howell and Jason E Bowman, London, Sept 2008:

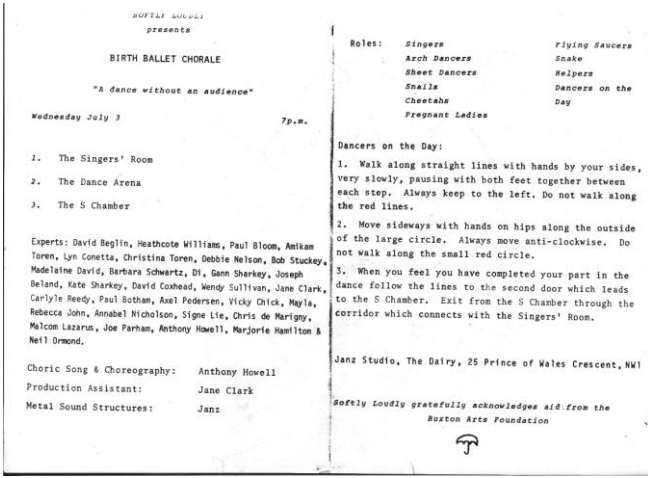
AH:
This is pre-Ting really. There was Jane Clark and Robert Janz. We had three huge, striped sheets, American stripes. King-sized striped sheets which were on tees which you could carry around… the pregnant women had red umbrellas and were turning very, very slowly so they could be enclosed by these great, huge sails. You'd have all these sounds going on overlapping each other.

JEB:
So women would just turn up on the day and were given a set of instructions?

AH: Yes.

JEB:
Where did you source the pregnant women from or was it all the women the men in the company had got pregnant? [Signe Lie Howell and Christina Toren were expecting]

AH (laughs):
I suppose it was *Time Out*. *Time Out* then was practically a Xerox. I think it was probably through *Time Out*… There's a ballet for pregnant ladies. Come along. There was a lot of pregnant ladies in Camden. Having got pregnant on Primrose Hill!



presents

BIRTH BALLET CHORALE

"A dance without an audience"

Wednesday July 3 7p.m.

1. The Singers' Room
2. The Dance Arena
3. The S Chamber

Experts: David Beglin, Heathcote Williams, Paul Bloom, Amikam Toren, Lyn Conetta, Christina Toren, Debbie Nelson, Bob Stuckey, Madelaine David, Barbara Schwartz, Di, Gann Sharkey, Joseph Beland, Kate Sharkey, David Coxhead, Wendy Sullivan, Jane Clark, Carlyle Reedy, Paul Botham, Axel Pedersen, Vicky Chick, Mayla, Rebecca John, Annabel Nicholson, Signe Lie, Chris de Marigny, Malcom Lazarus, Joe Parham, Anthony Howell, Marjorie Hamilton & Neil Ormond.

Choric Song & Choreography: Anthony Howell
Production Assistant: Jane Clark
Metal Sound Structures: Janz

Roles: Singers, Arch Dancers, Sheet Dancers, Snails, Cheetahs, Pregnant Ladies, Flying Saucers, Snake, Helpers, Dancers on the Day

Dancers on the Day:

1. Walk along straight lines with hands by your sides, very slowly, pausing with both feet together between each step. Always keep to the left. Do not walk along the red lines.
2. Move sideways with hands on hips along the outside of the large circle. Always move anti-clockwise. Do not walk along the small red circle.
3. When you feel you have completed your part in the dance follow the lines to the second door which leads to the S Chamber. Exit from the S Chamber through the corridor which connects with the Singers' Room.

Janz Studio, The Dairy, 25 Prince of Wales Crescent, NW1

Softly Loudly gratefully acknowledges aid from the Buxton Arts Foundation

Program and Instructions for *Birth Ballet Chorale (Ballet for Pregnant Ladies)* The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Ballet for Cars (1974)
See also: Purdies, Amikam Toren

Excerpt of review of *Ballet for Cars*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive:

> Whether seen as entities or as facilities, the cars in this ballet provided what was perhaps the apotheosis of the events at Purdies Farm, where, when the horns of those assembled sounded, a pillar of that sound went up, deafening the attendant drummers, scattering the surrounding performers, diverting the attention of dirt track competitors on the neighbouring common, and, at a distance of twelve miles, causing a freak tornado in Woking.



Amikam Toren's *Ballet for Cars* at Purdies farm, 1974
Photos: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive





Amikam Toren's *Ballet for Cars* at Purdies farm, 1974
Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Bibliography (Select)

Not strictly confined to books, this bibliography attempts to provide the interested with a means of immersion in Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes. It contains references to: scripts, reviews, articles, art works, fiction, poetry, contextual texts, sound recordings, conversations…

See also: Archive, Letters, Photographers

Key:
nd no date
TTOMA The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Audio-Visual

Copious photographs, diagrams, drawings: See TTOMA

Audio Arts *nd* (Cassette of all *Wallpaper* artists, including Ting)

Going 1977 Sound Recording National Sound Archive, British Library CDR 0006901 BD2-6 SSPL (featuring Anthony Howell, Fiona Templeton, Michael Greenall, Peter Stickland, Glenys Johnson)

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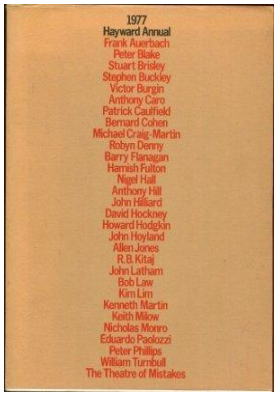

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Conversations

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Conversation with Amikam Toren
Conversation with Julian Maynard Smith, London, October 2008
Interview with Howard Tong, London, Oct 2008
Interview with Lindsay Moran London, 6th Nov 2008
Conversation with Miranda Payne, October 2008
Interview with Prof. Vicky Chick, Nov 4th 2008
Interview with Glenys Johnson: London, 18th Dec, 2008
Interview with Prof. Signe Howell, Oslo 13-14th October 2008
Interview with Anthony McCall
Interview/Conversations with Anthony Howell, Aug 08-Jan 09
Interview/Conversations with Peter Stickland Sept 08-Jan 09
Conversations with Fiona Templeton Fiona Templeton, Manhattan, 12th Sept, 2008, London October 2008

Numerous conversations between Jason E Bowman and Marie-Anne Mancio and anyone else who would listen.

Blind

Blindfolded performers occur in *Three Act Piece* and *Two Journeys.*



Three Act Piece Photo: © The Theatre of Mistakes

There was also an early *Performance for the Blind* but no-one recalls what this was…

Prologue:

choice by chance

for

blindfolded performer



Act One

Documentation of *Three Act Piece*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

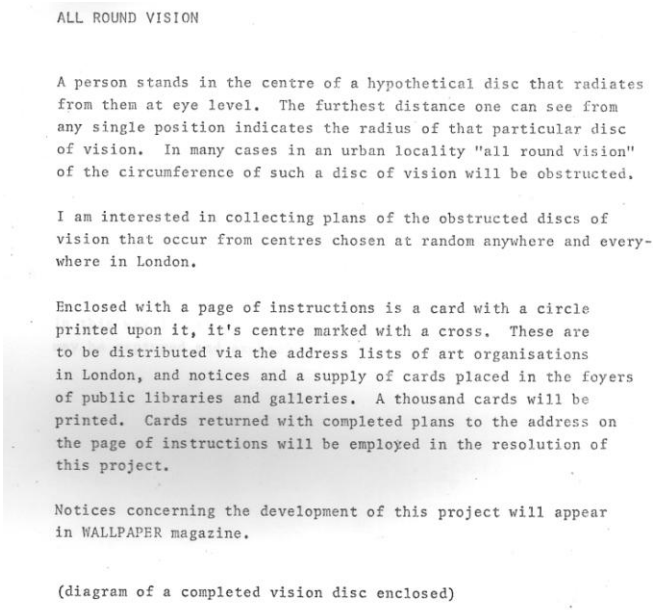
Bonvin, Susan



Susan Bonvin *Device for Looking at Landscape* Purdies farm, 1974
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive
The installation was reviewed by John Welch.

Artist, *All Round Vision*. Founder/editor of *Wallpaper*. Exhibited at the Art Room. Collaborates with husband Andrew Eden (see that entry for more information).

See also: Bibliography, Purdies.



ALL ROUND VISION

A person stands in the centre of a hypothetical disc that radiates from them at eye level. The furthest distance one can see from any single position indicates the radius of that particular disc of vision. In many cases in an urban locality "all round vision" of the circumference of such a disc of vision will be obstructed.

I am interested in collecting plans of the obstructed discs of vision that occur from centres chosen at random anywhere and everywhere in London.

Enclosed with a page of instructions is a card with a circle printed upon it, it's centre marked with a cross. These are to be distributed via the address lists of art organisations in London, and notices and a supply of cards placed in the foyers of public libraries and galleries. A thousand cards will be printed. Cards returned with completed plans to the address on the page of instructions will be employed in the resolution of this project.

Notices concerning the development of this project will appear in WALLPAPER magazine.

(diagram of a completed vision disc enclosed)

Notes for *Summer Pieces*, 20th June-20th July 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

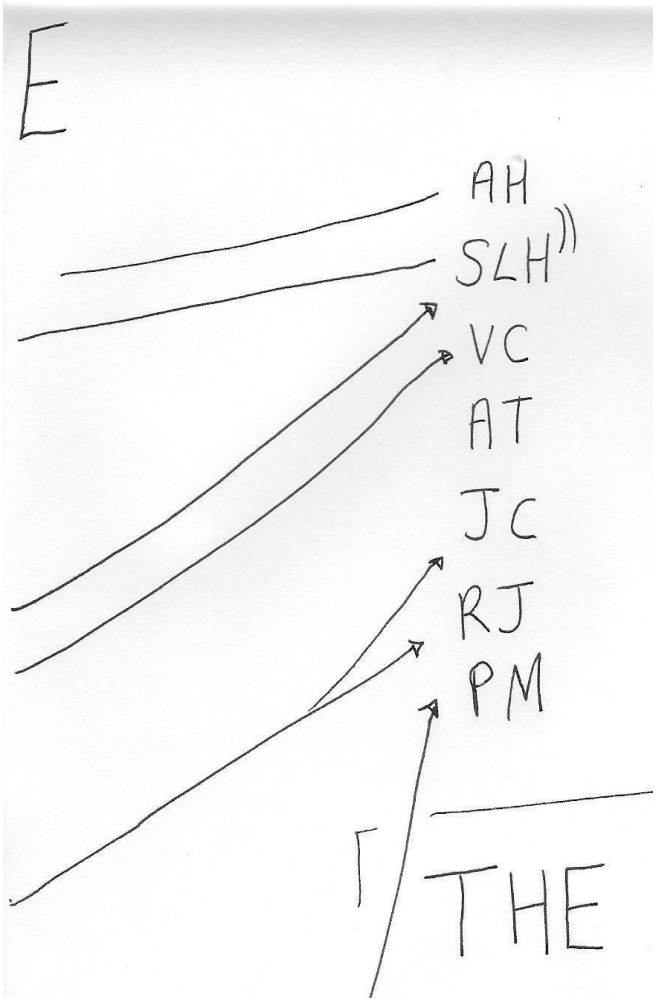
Bowman, Jason E

Jason E. Bowman trained as an artist, dropped out of being a cultural theorist, and tuned into being a curator and visual arts consultant. He rarely works or thinks alone. He was the co-curator for Scotland at the Venice Biennale in 2005 and is currently curating *Anniversary - an act of memory* for Monica Ross and developing the case for a retrospective of The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes. He started 'making' art again in 2009.

See also: Archive, Bibliography, Introduction

For writings by and about Bowman see -
http://www.sexmutant.com/bowman.htm
http://www.hamandenos.com/oompie-ka-doompie/jason.html
http://www.variant.randomstate.org/pdfs/issue8/Jason_Bowman.pdf
http://www.showmethemonet.russellmartin.org.uk/jason.html
http://www.a-n.co.uk/artists_talking/artists_stories/images/111155

And Ross –
www.
http://diffusion.org.uk/?tag=monica-ross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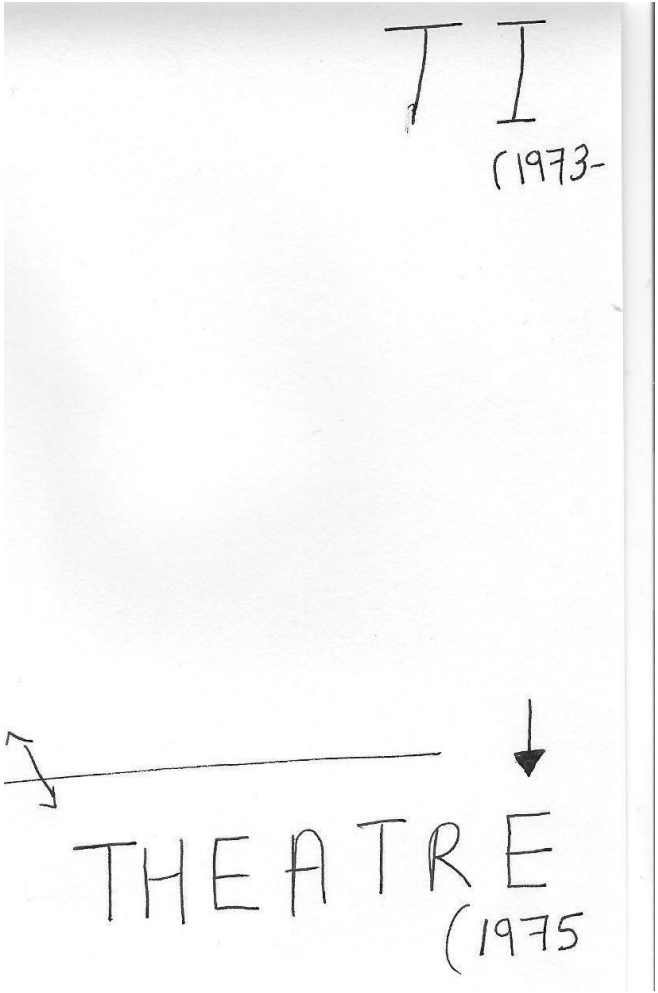
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2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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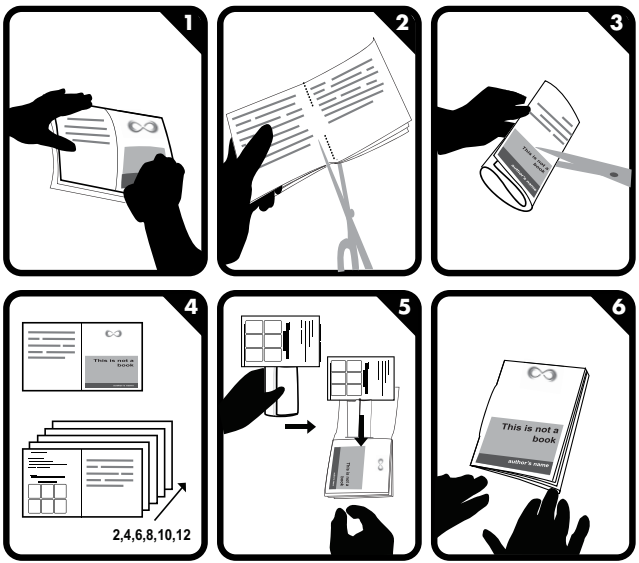


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – C

Marie-Anne Mancio

Cambridge Poetry Festival
Camouflage

Car
Cascade and Pour

Chaimowicz, Marc Camille
Chance
Chick, Victoria (Vicki/Vicky)
Choice by Chance
Chronology

Clark, Jane
Classicism

Clumsiness
Collaboration
Conceptualism

Core Group
Correspondence

Coxhead, David
Craig-Martin, Michael
Critics
Curator

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

C

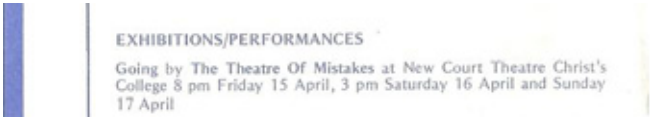
Marie-Anne Mancio



Poster for 1975 Cambridge Poetry Festival

Cambridge Poetry Festival

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes performed at the Cambridge Poetry Festival in April 1975 (*Preparations for Displacement*) and 1977 (*Going*).


EXHIBITIONS/PERFORMANCES

Going by The Theatre Of Mistakes at New Court Theatre Christ's College 8 pm Friday 15 April, 3 pm Saturday 16 April and Sunday 17 April

Reverse of the poster for the 1977 Cambridge Poetry Festival

See also: Audiences for a review by Sebastian Faulks, Bibliography, Cars, Robert Janz

Camouflage

Camouflage: All performers should wear costumes that camouflage them in the street (e.g. neutral street colours, a soaking wet performer camouflaging the street as the street on a wet day, a performer camouflaged as a road sweeper etc.)while at the same time parts of the street—walls,pavements, gardens—are to be camouflaged. Thus the street is disguised as a performance space and vice versa. A breakdown truck from the garage on the Leverton Street corner to be draped in military camouflage netting (lent by Coldstream Guards, Chelsea Barracks) and parked inside the factory archway blocking entry to the audience.

Notes from *The Street* (1975), The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

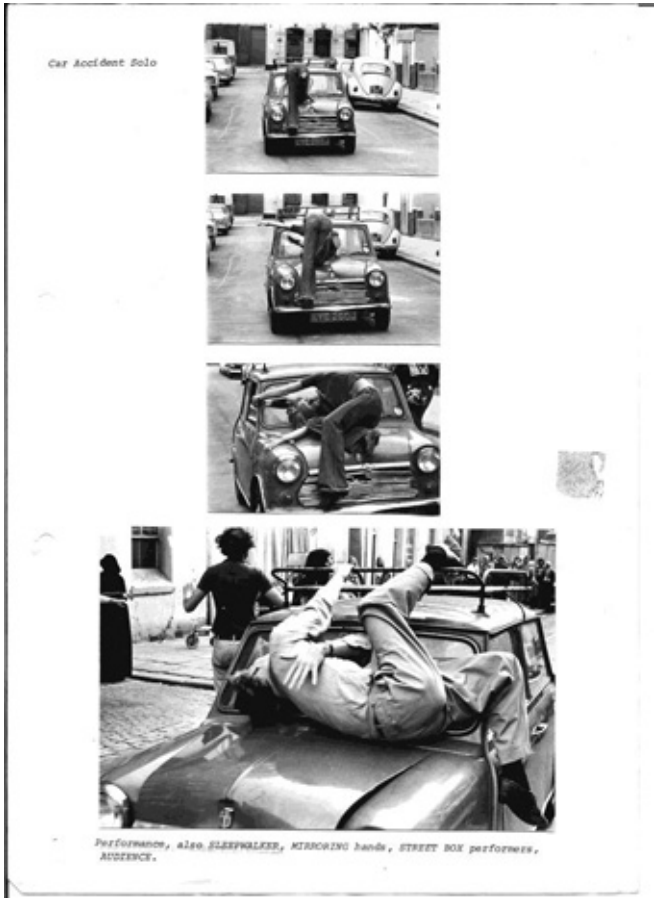
Camouflage by Display and Display by Displacement: Various locations including St. Pauls, the British Museum, Sunday May 16th1976. Lindsay Moran recalls a near arrest by a policeman who was not amused by his performance of standing absolutely still in Burlington Arcade…
(Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov, 2008)

Car -
Accident (See also: Victoria Chick, Miranda Payne, *The Street*, Howard Tong) performed /real
Also: *Ballet for Cars*, created by Amikam Toren who was apparently a non-driver.

Cascade and Pour See ***Waterfall***

Chaimowicz, Marc Camille (1947-)
Installation/performance artist involved in early Ting, also previewed *Homage to Pietro Longhi* (see Bibliography). Read: Tom Holert *Celebration? Real Life*, Afterall books, 2007.

Chance
See also: Art Room, Hour book
Choice by Chance, or die-throwing, was a conceptual presence from the inception of The Ting. The popularity of the I-Ching (see Elizabeth Moran; Joseph Yu *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the I Ching*, 2001)– which was republished in the late 60s and early 70s and used by choreographer Merce Cunningham - and a Ting dice weekend (recalled by Peter Stickland) whereby all dice decisions were adhered to, were less important than the use of the die as a democratizing element and the preferred method of determining roles within the company. (In 1975, the dice selected Pat Murphy, Fiona Templeton, and Michael Greenall to devise *The Street* and chose Templeton as its director, for example.) For the artist, chance functions to eliminate the 'hand' or the Modernist mark; it nullifies personality; frees the mind from clichéd associations by recognizing the potential of randomness. Words placed alongside one another in unlikely combinations; images created by **accident**. Published in 1971, *The Dice Man* the autobiography of Luke Rinehart (MD), himself a fiction created by George Cockcroft,



Howard Tong performs car accident solo in *The Street*
Photographs ©The Theatre of Mistakes

investigates whether it is possible or desirable to break down the self into a multitude of selves by using die in the place of free will. It asks: is the loss of a coherent, stable self (schizophrenia) a position that can be maintained? Or, does that adherence to instability constitute a new coherent self? In being no-one, can we be anyone? (See The Theatre of Mistakes' *Going*.) The act of research, of collating and ordering, of selection and interpretation, is riddled with chance elements. In this instance: Howard Tong and Miranda Payne live a ten-minute walk away from one another in London and didn't know it; Christina Toren and Signe Lie Howell are now both Professors of Anthropology; Lindsay Moran joins Facebook a couple of days before he is looked for…

Chick, Victoria (Vicki/Vicky)



Above, far right: Victoria Chick at Purdies farm, beating oil drums, August 1974 Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Recruited to perform at Anthony Howell's poetry readings then with Ting by Signe Lie Howell (both were members of the Southend Green Women's Liberation group in the early 70s), economist Victoria Chick suffered a bad car accident during the Cambridge Poetry Festival of 1975 and was hospitalised. She recalls Ting announcing the news at the start of *Preparations for Displacement*

"and the next day this man came to the hospital ward and you could see him negotiating with the ward sister because he'd actually come to visit me though he didn't know me… nobody does that… And he was an economist and he came to visit me just because he was an economist and I was an economist"

(Interview: Victoria Chick, London, 4th Nov 2008)



Victoria Chick in *Preparations for Displacement* at the Cambridge Poetry Festival, April 1975 Photograph ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Chick performed in *The Street*, also 1975, before leaving for Australia. She is currently Emeritus Professor of Economics at University College London (read: Philip Arestis, Meghnad Desai, Sheila Dow (eds), *Essays in Honour of Victoria Chick: Money, MacroEconomics and Keynes*, Routledge 2002) and a keen singer.

Choice by Chance see **Chance**, Manifesto

Chronology

1981:
Homage to Morandi, Going; *Table Move*, Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre, London; *Homage to Morandi* Tour of Belgium; *Homage to Morandi* and *Table Move 1,* Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin

1980:
Orpheus and Hermes, Brighton Theatre Festival,
Duet for Orpheus and Hermes and *Homage to Morandi*, University Theatre Festival, Brescia, Salle Polyvalente, Ferrara
Homage to Morandi Tour of Holland

1977-9:

1977 Feb: "Going", Scottish Tour of Edinburgh College of Art, St Andrew's Festival, Third Eye Centre Glasgow, Aberdeen Art Gallery
Apr: "Going", Cambridge International Poetry Festival
Jul-Sep: "A Waterfall", 48-day performance series at Hayward Annual Exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London; also workshops
Sep: "Going", Biennale de Paris, Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris
" "Trio 2", Galerie Farideh Cadot, Paris
Oct: "Going", FIAC (International Contemporary Art Fair), Grand Palais, Paris
77-78: Workshops at Essex Road Baths, London
1978 Mar: "Two Freedoms", Vancouver School of Art
May: "Two Freedoms" and "Going", April Meeting, Student Cultural Centre, Belgrade
" "Rape of the Mind", "Going", "Waterfall 3", Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol
Nov: "Going", Floating Theater Festival, Pittsburgh University
" "Going", Pennsylvania State Penitentiary, Pittsburgh
Dec: "Going", Theater for the New City, New York City
1979 Jun: "Orpheus and Hermes", Forum für Aktuelle Kunst, Innsbruck
" "Two Freedoms", Grafik Biennale", Vienna

1974-6:

THE TING: THEATRE OF MISTAKES Performances 1974-1976

1974 Nov: The Ting at A.M.P., London
1975 Apr: "Preparations for Displacement", Cambridge International Poetry Festival
Jul: "The Street", London
" : "Pairs Game", "The Three Act Piece", "Sabotage Piece", Southampton Performance Show
Aug: "Solos", "Automotive Regeneration", "Height Slides and Collisions", The Village Green, Hartley Wintney
Sep: "Anti-Gravity", Basingstoke
Oct: "Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session", The London Exhibition
Nov: "The Lecture Performance", Roundhouse, London
Dec: Ting Free Session, Roundhouse
1976 Feb: "The Three Act Piece", new version, Goldsmiths College, London
Mar: "Elements of Performance Art", 15 performers, Winchester School of Art
May: "Pairs Game", new version, Slade School of Art, London
" "Two Journeys", Slade School of Art
June: Acme Gallery, London, New Contemporaries
"Elements of Performance Art", 3 performers, Maidstone College of Art
" : "The Table Piece", open rehearsals, Goldsmiths
" : " " " " " Falkland Fair, London
" : "The Table Piece", University of East Anglia
Jul: Reversal, The Art Room, London
Aug: "Active Circles", Hartley Wintney
"The Table Piece", Chieveley
"Trio", Artist's Market, London
Sept: "Scenes at a Table", London Calling
"Homage to Pietro Longhi" (Scenes at a Table), Serpentine Gallery, London
Nov: "The Ascent of the Stedelijk", Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

Notes from The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive
See also: Ting, *Birth Ballet Chorale*

Clark, Jane

See also: *Birth Ballet Chorale,* Ephemera, *The Street*, Women

Film maker (*Circle*, *Water Reflection*, 1973) who lived in a cardboard house in Robert Janz's studio at the Dairy in the early days of The Ting and participated in several Ting discussions/performances. In 1979, along with Annabel Nicholson and Pat Murphy, Clark was one of 11 women who funded Circles, which grew from the London Film Makers' Co-op. Circles was radical, interested in interdisciplinary practice and co-operative models of working, and wanted to erode boundaries between film/video, promoting performance and installation. Its works reflected a "female point of view which undermines many of the traditional ways of making and watching films. Circles was also committed to bringing forgotten early women's film back into distribution, and to representing the work within a feminist context."
(Mel Taylor "To whom it may concern" *FilmWaves*, issue 8,Summer 1999)

Classicism See **Ballet**, *Going*

Clumsiness

Howard Tong's move away from performance was partly a cause of his dissatisfaction with the clumsiness of people. He was fascinated by the concepts explored by The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes, but felt the outcome of these investigations were marred in performance by something as simple as the sound of feet in movement.

Collaboration See **Mutuality**, *Wallpaper*

Conceptualism

See: Bibliography, Unwritten

Conceptual art is perhaps best viewed as a disparate range of practices prevalent in the 60s and 70s; practices that range from Joseph Kosuth, Yoko Ono, Adrian Piper in the U.S. to John Latham in the UK, to Cildo Mierles in Brazil and which could be said to have originated with Duchamp's infamous urinal.

There are certainly parallels between The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes and some conceptual artists' approach to documentation. The Theatre of Mistakes' *Scene* and *Time* diagrams for *Scenes at a Table*, for example were conceived as visual representations of the performance structure, and individually coloured, signed, framed, and sold as artworks in their own right. Equally, the *Elements* book with its instruction-based exercises might be read as the equivalent of a Sol Le Witt or a Stanley Brouwn piece, enabling the reader to create their own works, albeit ones with multiple permutations. However, contrary to Lucy Soutter's claim ("The Photographic Idea: Reconsidering Conceptual Photography" *Afterimage* Mar-Apr 1999) that "since the mid-60s conceptual artists have denied any interest in photography *per se*", The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes deployed photography as more than a means of documentation. It informed the practice of at least three associated artists – Robert Janz, Glenys Johnson and Lindsay Moran – and resulting images reflect preoccupations with time and space (*cf* Pat Murphy on her "Muybridge solo" in *Preparations for Displacement* and multiple photographs of *Waterfall*).

It is also worth noting, as Peter Stickland says, that The Theatre of Mistakes saw themselves as artists and whilst they very aware of conceptual practice (in conversations with Bowman and Mancio, Howell cited the work of Henry Flynt - www.henryflynt.org - as influential), they were also as happy to be unfashionably engrossed in Pietro Longhi. (Conversations: London, Oct 08-Jan 09)

Given the bias towards the theatrical in writings on performance, a reassessment of The Theatre of Mistakes' impact on British conceptualism in the 1970s is overdue.

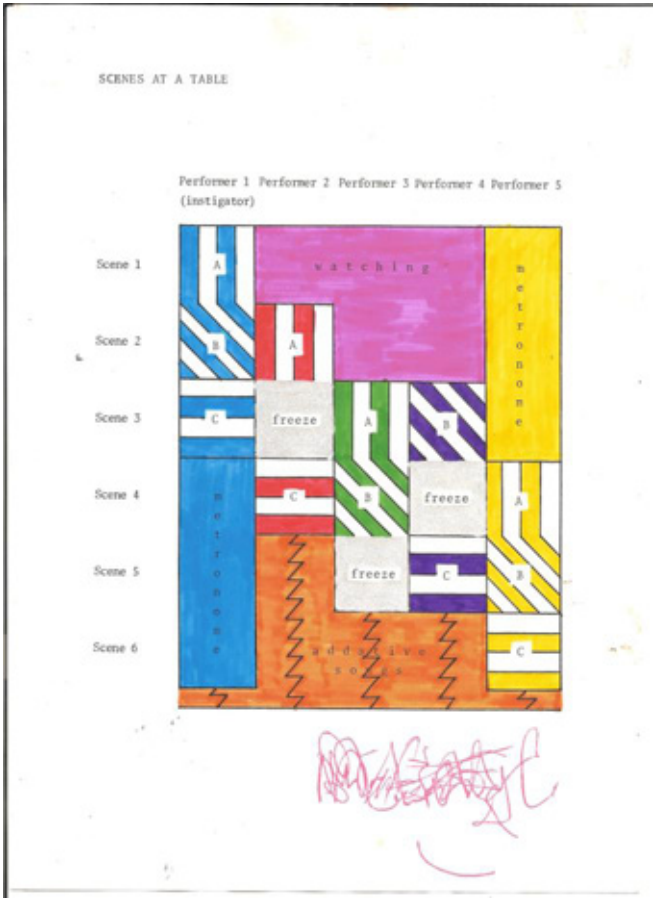
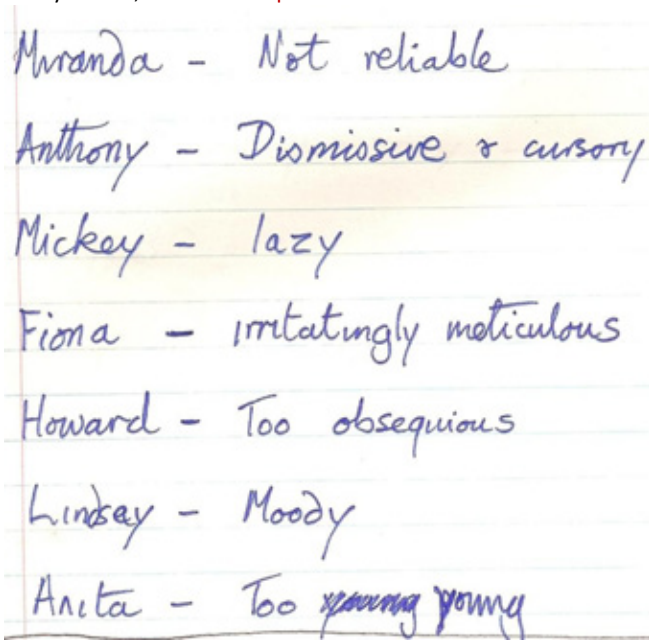


Diagram for *Scenes at a Table* signed with Mutuality signature. Framed versions also exist, implying that these were considered artworks. ©The Theatre of Mistakes

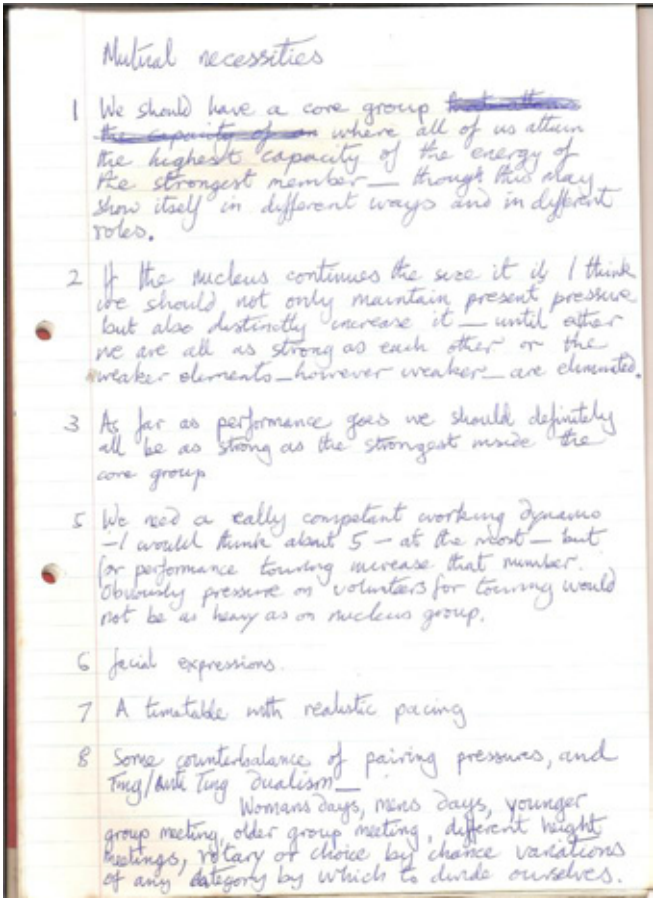
Core Group (The Theatre of Mistakes)

The core group shifted over the years. Documentation (programs) refers variously to nuclei of five, six, and seven performers. Mike Owen for instance appears to be among them but Howard Tong's recollection is that Owen was not a constant presence. In the summer of 1975, the group comprised: Anthony Howell, Fiona Templeton, Michael Greenall, Howard Tong, Miranda Payne, Lindsay Moran, and Anita Urquhart.



Above: Group members articulated criticisms of one another; page from a notebook held by Anthony Howell, nd, c 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

See also: Fantasy, Nucleus, Performers, Ting



Mutual necessities

1 We should have a core group ~~that all the the capacity of us~~ where all of us attain the highest capacity of the energy of the strongest member — though this may show itself in different ways and in different roles.

2 If the nucleus continues the size it is I think we should not only maintain present pressure but also distinctly increase it — until either we are all as strong as each other or the weaker elements — however weaker — are eliminated.

3 As far as performance goes we should definitely all be as strong as the strongest inside the core group

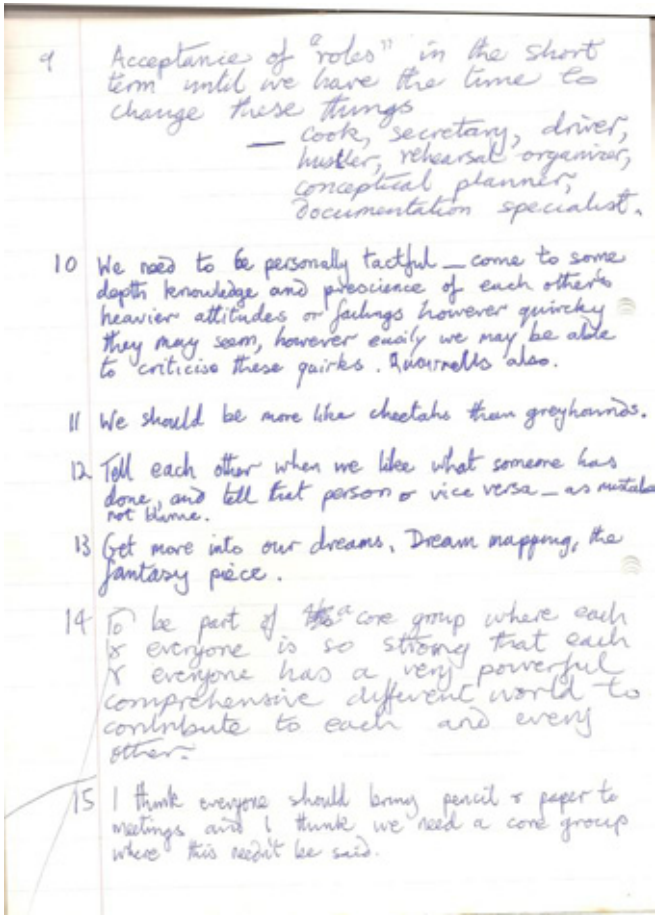
5 We need a really competent working dynamo — I would think about 5 — at the most — but for performance touring increase that number. Obviously pressure on volunteers for touring would not be as heavy as on nucleus group.

6 facial expressions.

7 A timetable with realistic pacing

8 Some counterbalance of pairing pressures, and Yang/Both Yang dualism —
Womans days, mens days, younger group meeting, older group meeting, different height meetings, rotary or choice by chance variations of any category by which to divide ourselves.

Page from Notebook of Anthony Howell, nd, c.1975
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



9 Acceptance of "roles" in the short term until we have the time to change these things
— cook, secretary, driver, hustler, rehearsal organizer, conceptual planner, documentation specialist.

10 We need to be personally tactful — come to some depth knowledge and prescience of each others heavier attitudes or failings however quircky they may seem, however easily we may be able to criticise these quirks. Quarrells also.

11 We should be more like cheetahs than greyhounds.

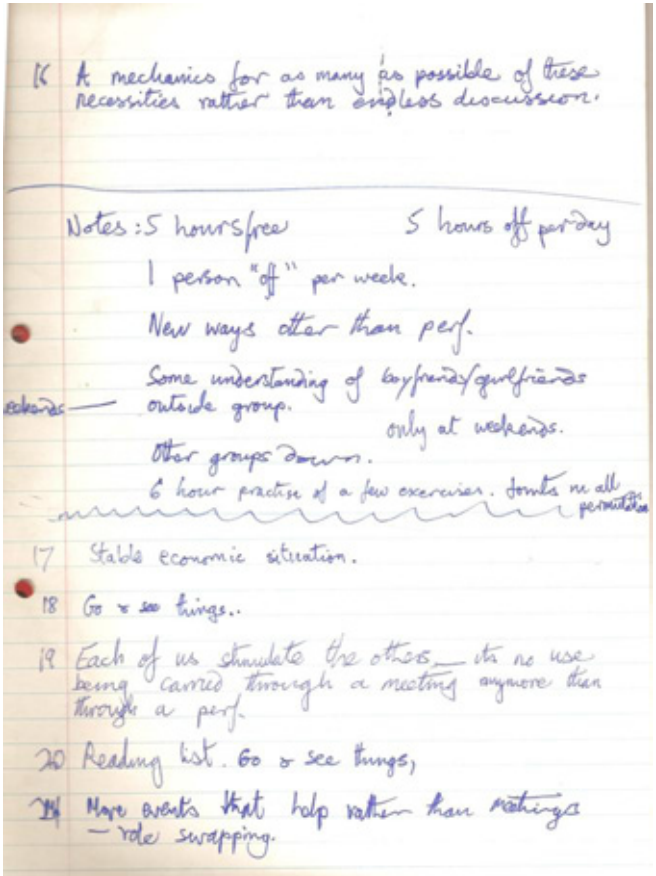
12 Tell each other when we like what someone has done, and tell that person or vice versa — as mutable not blame.

13 Get more into our dreams. Dream mapping, the fantasy piece.

14 To be part of the core group where each & everyone is so strong that each & everyone has a very powerful comprehensive different world to contribute to each and every other.

15 I think everyone should bring pencil & paper to meetings and I think we need a core group where this needn't be said.

Page from Notebook of Anthony Howell, nd, c.1975
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Page from Notebook of Anthony Howell, nd, c.1975
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

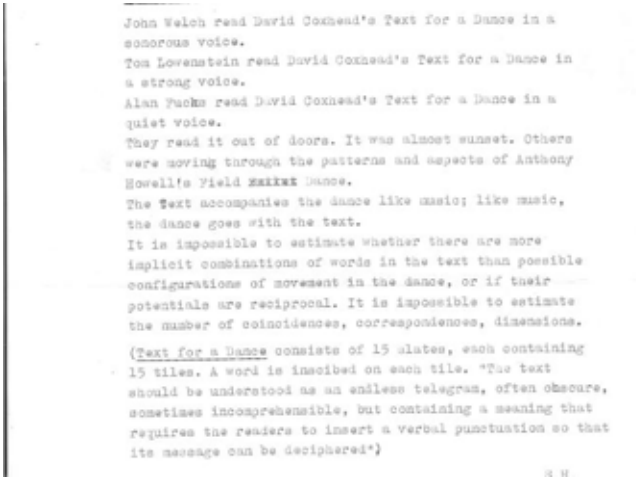
Tong and Urquhart left; Peter Stickland replaced Moran in 1976 and Glenys Johnson and Julian Maynard Smith took on core group roles. In the shift from the looser Ting to the more structured core - The Theatre of Mistakes - there was perhaps more critique, more analysis amongst participants. Despite the reviews of the August 1974 weekend event at Purdies that Anthony Howell persuaded participating artists to write, Andrew Eden and Susan Bonvin insist, "There was no point at which there was any kind of feedback. No, it just wasn't in any way like that." (Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008). However, this does contradict Signe Lie Howell's memory that there was always discussion or 'post-mortems' after workshops/performances.

Correspondence See **Letters**

Coxhead, David See also: Bibliography, Ting, *Wallpaper*
Writer of: novels (*Afghanistan*), analysis (*Dream: Visions of the* Night with partner Susan Hiller); art criticism *Amikam Toren - Actualities* (Matt's Galleries, 1984)



David Coxhead *Text for a Dance* Purdies, August 1974



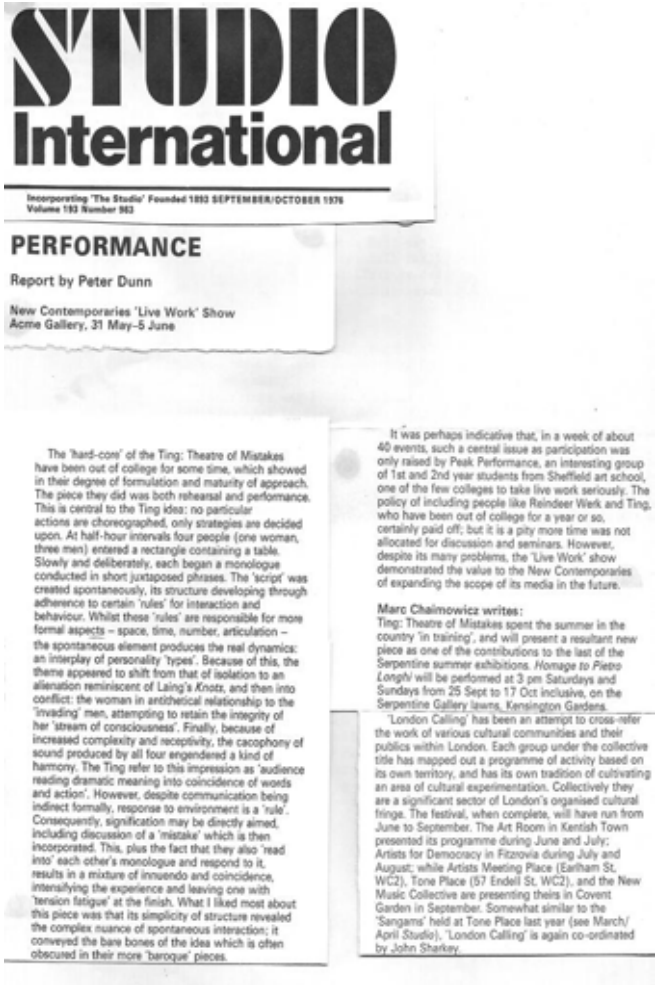
John Welch read David Coxhead's Text for a Dance in a sonorous voice.
Tom Lowenstein read David Coxhead's Text for a Dance in a strong voice.
Alan Fuchs read David Coxhead's Text for a Dance in a quiet voice.
They read it out of doors. It was almost sunset. Others were moving through the patterns and aspects of Anthony Howell's Field ~~XXXXX~~ Dance.
The Text accompanies the dance like music; like music, the dance goes with the text.
It is impossible to estimate whether there are more implicit combinations of words in the text than possible configurations of movement in the dance, or if their potentials are reciprocal. It is impossible to estimate the number of coincidences, correspondences, dimensions.

(Text for a Dance consists of 15 slates, each containing 15 tiles. A word is inscribed on each tile. 'The text should be understood as an endless telegram, often obscure, sometimes incomprehensible, but containing a meaning that requires the readers to insert a verbal punctuation so that its message can be deciphered')

Review by SH [Susan Hiller] of *Text for a Dance* nd, c.1974
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Craig-Martin, Michael (1941-)
(See www.michaelcraig-martin.com) Conceptual artist, educator, and close friend/partner of Michael Greenall. Curator of *Summer Show 5* at the Serpentine in 1976 at which The Theatre of Mistakes performed *Homage to Pietro Longhi*. According to Anthony Howell, Craig-Martin influenced the company, attending all the performances of *Going* and several rehearsals.
(See Anthony Howell in Nick Kaye's *Art Into Theatre*, Harwood Academic, 1996, 137)

Critics
See also: Audiences, Bibliography



STUDIO International

Incorporating 'The Studio' Founded 1893 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1976
Volume 193 Number 983

PERFORMANCE

Report by Peter Dunn

New Contemporaries 'Live Work' Show
Acme Gallery, 31 May–5 June

The 'hard-core' of the Ting: Theatre of Mistakes have been out of college for some time, which showed in their degree of formulation and maturity of approach. The piece they did was both rehearsal and performance. This is central to the Ting idea: no particular actions are choreographed, only strategies are decided upon. At half-hour intervals four people (one woman, three men) entered a rectangle containing a table. Slowly and deliberately, each began a monologue conducted in short juxtaposed phrases. The 'script' was created spontaneously, its structure developing through adherence to certain 'rules' for interaction and behaviour. Whilst these 'rules' are responsible for more formal aspects – space, time, number, articulation – the spontaneous element produces the real dynamics: an interplay of personality 'types'. Because of this, the theme appeared to shift from that of isolation to an alienation reminiscent of Laing's *Knots*, and then into conflict: the woman in antithetical relationship to the 'invading' men, attempting to retain the integrity of her 'stream of consciousness'. Finally, because of increased complexity and receptivity, the cacophony of sound produced by all four engendered a kind of harmony. The Ting refer to this impression as 'audience reading dramatic meaning into coincidence of words and action'. However, despite communication being indirect formally, response to environment is a 'rule'. Consequently, signification may be directly aimed, including discussion of a 'mistake' which is then incorporated. This, plus the fact that they also 'read into' each other's monologue and respond to it, results in a mixture of innuendo and coincidence, intensifying the experience and leaving one with 'tension fatigue' at the finish. What I liked most about this piece was that its simplicity of structure revealed the complex nuance of spontaneous interaction; it conveyed the bare bones of the idea which is often obscured in their more 'baroque' pieces.

It was perhaps indicative that, in a week of about 40 events, such a central issue as participation was only raised by Peak Performance, an interesting group of 1st and 2nd year students from Sheffield art school, one of the few colleges to take live work seriously. The policy of including people like Reindeer Werk and Ting, who have been out of college for a year or so, certainly paid off; but it is a pity more time was not allocated for discussion and seminars. However, despite its many problems, the 'Live Work' show demonstrated the value to the New Contemporaries of expanding the scope of its media in the future.

Marc Chalmowicz writes:
Ting: Theatre of Mistakes spent the summer in the country 'in training', and will present a resultant new piece as one of the contributions to the last of the Serpentine summer exhibitions. *Homage to Pietro Longhi* will be performed at 3 pm Saturdays and Sundays from 25 Sept to 17 Oct inclusive, on the Serpentine Gallery lawns, Kensington Gardens.

'London Calling' has been an attempt to cross-refer the work of various cultural communities and their publics within London. Each group under the collective title has mapped out a programme of activity based on its own territory, and has its own tradition of cultivating an area of cultural experimentation. Collectively they are a significant sector of London's organised cultural fringe. The festival, when complete, will have run from June to September. The Art Room in Kentish Town presented its programme during June and July; Artists for Democracy in Fitzrovia during July and August; while Artists Meeting Place (Earlham St, WC2), Tone Place (57 Endell St, WC2), and the New Music Collective are presenting theirs in Covent Garden in September. Somewhat similar to the 'Sangams' held at Tone Place last year (see March/April *Studio*), 'London Calling' is again co-ordinated by John Sharkey.

PERFORMANCE ART 1
magazine

The Theatre of Mistakes, Waterfall.
Paula Cooper Gallery (November).

Stepping out of an aesthetic time warp, The Theatre of Mistakes, an English collaborative group, presents a wonderfully anachronistic process piece in Waterfall. The work is built around the sixties formalist icon of structure, an attitude in which an idea about structure is both method and subject. The performers, seated on a pyramid of chairs, rhythmically and systematically transfer a bucket of water, cup by cup, from the floor to the top of the stack. When the higher bucket is full, it is poured in a cascade back into the bottom one.

Like all such process works, what you see in Waterfall is what you get. There's no development other than the playing out of the system, and no narrative since even the minor suspense of the ending is blunted by a program note which telegraphs the epiphany. Instead, attention is carried by events generated from the structure's functions, such as the continuous rhythm and variations played on it. At a couple of points, the ritualized pouring briefly halts while the performers relax, talk informally, and even drink some of the carefully handled water. From such tinkering with the ongoing machinery emerge Waterfall's small pleasures.

Waterfall adheres to the process dictum of a reduced, simple task on which to work systematic permutations. What results is a static composition of mild abstraction with white costumes, de-personalized roles, and repetitive action, all to further emphasize the priority of formal arrangements over any trajectory stemming from subject matter. As a form, this set-up resembles an imagistic poem more than a discursive narrative (a systemic poem is used to time the piece's actions). Waterfall's one hour length, however, aspires to the latter's effects and thereby dilutes a strong impressionistic impact. Such a length appears to stretch its brief insights on a frame that calls for a more expansive and overall view. After some twenty minutes, the novelty pales and an initial wonder fades into ennui as one waits out the inevitable end.

Since idea governs the performance, the weight of "interest" falls on execution, and these performers exhibit a consistent precision throughout. In an approach also typical



WATERFALL

of most process work, the group creates a collective identity based on interior absorption in a complicated ritual. While hardly acting, their presence registers as something beyond matter-of-fact doing (the other process performing choice), motivated by a system complex enough to require a constant attention to avoid mistakes. Here a touch of the exotic impinges, as British accents, unknown personalities, and a clearly strenuous discipline figure as a subtext of color to an American audience. That the action of Waterfall creates a nominal ritual does not diminish the considerable skill with which the performers present it.

John Howell

LE MATIN/26 octobre 1977

ARTS

A LA Xe BIENNALE DE PARIS

ART VIDÉO ET PERFORMANCE

Le refus de «la belle image»

LE refus de « la belle image », apparaît par le cinéaste ou le réalisateur de télévision, apparaît comme une caractéristique commune aux travaux présentés dans la section vidéo de la Biennale de Paris. La grande maniabilité de l'appareil vidéo, qui enregistre le son et l'image, l'inutilité d'une source d'éclairage supplémentaire, le coût peu élevé de la bande vidéo même dictent un style direct, sans affectation, parfaitement adapté au saisissant reportage du *Groupe de 4* sur la vie et la misère d'immigrés turcs en France.

On retrouve ce parti pris dans *Ile Dérélé à la parresse* de François Pain qui peut opérer dans le métro dans des conditions clandestines grâce à l'emploi de la minuscule caméra « Palluche ». Avec *Dans les yeux de l'esprit*, de la Britannique Tamara Krikorian, qui nous fait suivre une série d'émissions de télévision, reflétées dans la pupille d'une téléspectatrice passant d'une chaîne à l'autre, l'art vidéo devient un art de la simultanéité comme le montre aussi, de façon plus spectaculaire, l'utilisation, dans les environnements vidéo, de plusieurs moniteurs projetant des programmes plus ou moins différents.

C'est précisément la simultanéité de l'enregistrement et de la projection, propre à la vidéo, sorte de caméra Polaroid, que mettent à profit deux Californiens, Ko Fitzgerald et John Sanborn. Echangé en trois parties nous présente des rapports entre des niveaux différents d'images, établis par une série d'appareils vidéo intégrés à l'action filmée, qui font basculer les corps, les objets et les éléments du décor dans un espace à fonds multiples : les actions les plus simples oscillent entre le réel et l'imaginaire, et sont autant de cas dont les artistes tirent des effets pleins d'humour et de poésie. Les deux artistes évoluent dans un monde à la fois matériel (ils mangent, marchent, s'assoient), et mental dont les mécanismes nous sont montrés sans ostentation d'explication.

C'est avec la même discrétion, pourrait-on dire, que le groupe britannique Ting (Theatre of Mistakes) présente le découpage de gestes quels : marcher, s'asseoir, tomber, dire au revoir, qui sont exécutés lentement, sans souci pour le beau geste, et répétés en différents points de l'espace scénique par cinq acteurs, qui échangent une série de répliques, contribuant à créer un rythme dramatique sans contenu mais qui n'en dégage pas moins une singulière énergie. On n'hésite pas à voir dans *Going* la représentation dramatique ou « performance » présentée par le Théâtre des Erreurs au début de la Biennale, comme l'un des événements de cette manifestation.

Michel Couturier

ST ANDREWS

Cordelia Oliver

Ting Theatre of Mistakes

A GROUP calling itself the Ting Theatre of Mistakes performed at St Andrews Festival as part of the Demarco Gallery's Edinburgh Arts Exhibition on the Upper College Hall of St Andrews University (the exhibition itself I reviewed during the Edinburgh shows). The word theatre is somewhat misleading. This more or less free development of a given theme within a given structure is rather sculptural (a development of Gilbert and George, perhaps ?) and, even more so, musical in its form.

A handful of cliché phrases and gestures on the subject of leavetaking ("I really must go now" - "But you can't - I do have to go" - "Well if you must you must" - and so on) are laid down then gradually developed by inversion, counterpoint, and so forth, not excluding the occasional accidental or inadvertent happening.

The action continues, in creative repetition, in five positions round a square—one for each permutation (there are five performers, three men and two girls, all moving in extremely slow deliberate patterns). Looking and futuring and feeling to sustain one's concentration (for the action takes over an hour and is, at times, frankly soporific) one becomes aware of different resonances, sensual not loud, and an underlying tension (occasionally, too, one would have liked to touch, but desisted through self-consciousness).

I said it was sculptural : but the slow-moving images in their square corral (five conventionally group-ed figures, well-groomed from their neat hair to their polished black shoes) also recall a certain kind of contemporary realist painting, colour-drained, serious and deadpan in a way that approaches surrealism.

THE GUARDIAN
22nd FEB 1977

In the neat, bleak little theatre in Christ's College, the Theatre of Mistakes has been giving performances of *Going*, a work by Anthony Howell, a member of the company. It is performed not merely in the round but, in the musical sense, as a round. The furniture is a small table and two hard chairs, and the dialogue a dozen rhetorical lines which give no hint of what has gone before.

The five players, clad in uniform grey, swap parts when the lines run out, turn round the furniture, and start again. It is not long before the audience knows the piece by heart and is tensely awaiting each remembered move. Each time round, the lines are delivered with identical timing and expression, separated by unbearable pauses in which you can hear your neighbour's watch.

Silent screaming point arrives after about 40 minutes. By then, you are so helplessly involved as a volunteer obliging a mourner-let. You do not cough, shuffle or change cheeks. You wait for the end, but there is no end, just three young men and two young women singing, humming or reciting in dissonant unison before marching off, one by one, putting out the lights as they go.

DENIS THOMAS THE LISTENER 28/4/77

Visual Arts: News

Time Out



Melodrama Of The Mundane

While caution and compromise pervade the London art scene, Sarah Kent *goes overboard about Tings . . . or, more precisely, The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes, who are peddling their performance wares at the Jeannetta Cochrane Theatre this week.*

I am passionate about The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes now performing 'Going', 'Homage to Morandi' and 'The Table Move' at the Jeannetta Cochrane Theatre. Amongst their more bizarre achievements was the 'Ascent of the Stedelijk' in which a horizontal assault was made on the museum's first floor balcony with the aid of climbing tackle and full regalia, as though it were a mountain peak turned on its side!

Their more traditional gallery and theatre performances are also based on the proposition that the ludicrous can be profound. 'Going' was performed to an audience mainly of black 'lifers' at the Pittsburg Penitentiary to an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response. This seemed like a tall story until I saw the show for myself. Then I understood how people incarresembled office workers stuck in a company hierarchy. In this respect we are all lifers serving our term in the mud of our own routines, cemented to the spot by our evasions, indecisions and compromises.

But while reminding us of these truisms, the piece is also incredibly, sadly funny. Deeply felt emotions are buried within bland stereotypes as negotiations between individuals proceed, accompanied by much hand shaking and waving goodbye in, exchanges like 'Must you go?' 'Really, I must go.' 'If you must, you must.'

But suppressed feeling erupts into screaming rage and confrontation, as a performer yells 'She doesn't have to go, does she?' And three actors swoon with the tension of pent up emotion.

Divided into five scenes, so that each of the five participants harmonics of a sickly choral finale in which snatches of 'Every time we say goodbye' is synchronised with 'Pack up all my cares and woes, Here I go, Bye, Bye, blackbird.' But, in spite of the optimistic conclusion and its celebration of departure, no-one actually manages to leave. And we suspect that all attempts to escape from the mental and physical barriers represented by the perimeter line will be frustrated.

Like 'Going', 'Homage to Morandi' illustrates the thesis that, although people appear to act upon intelligent decisions and to control their lives, out time is actually filled with meaningless Pavlovian routines that achieve little except to take us through from birth to death. Inspired by Morandi's metaphysical paintings, the performance is a series of three-dimensional still-lives with two wardrobes, three suitcases and four white chairs continuously man-handled into new arrangements. Like everyone intently involved in creative work, the three performers are rarely satisfied and continue to work on improvements to the composition, becoming so involved that they begin to identify with the furniture in their charge. Julian, as a removal man in a brown warehouse coat, is gradually transformed into a disgruntled wardrobe: 'Who wants to be a tall boy?' Peter, wearing a white boiler suit, stacks and restacks office chairs chanting 'And another chair; And another chair; And another chair' until he too, grumblingly identifies with his low grade charges muttering, 'I could have been Chippendale.' Anthony in Khaki is responsible for suitcases — putting them on and taking them off the wardrobes, opening and closing them — until sitting in on his luggage, he announces 'Nothing to declare.'

As in 'Going', dreams of escape from the dreary routine jobs which this charade parodies so devastatingly, permeate the piece in throwaway comments like 'Have suitcase, will travel.' But escape from their drone-like existence seems as unlikely as the salesgirl on the beauty counter winning the Miss World Competition, or the bloke in travel goods realising his dream of a world tour.

A cross between Greek tragedy and Samuel Beckett, the Ting's

Amongst the artists/critics who have looked at The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes' work are:
Pat Murphy, David Coxhead, Susan Hiller, Susan (Bonvin) Eden, Jane Clark, Amanda Welch, John Welch, John Sharkey, Peter Dunn, Sebastian Faulks, John Spurling, Adrian Searle, Michael Couturier, Marc Chaimowicz, David Cunningham, Paul Overy, Sarah Kent, Tim Hilton, Alan Fuchs, Michael Shepherd, William Feaver, Donna Lange, John Howell, Stuart Morgan, Andre Rutten, Jac Heijer, Jan Baart, Daniel de Lange, Sue Wardlaw, Anthony Masters, Rainer Hoynck, Sue Bannerman, John Howell, Nick Wood, Marie-Anne Mancio, Jason E Bowman.

Prism, Ting and Ruanne

YOU have only to think of Martha Graham to realise the potential hidden in some small outsider groups, but in these days of mass ballet audiences it is easy to overlook them. Two examples were to be seen in London recently.

They well represented the wide range of such experiments. **Dance Prism** at the Collegiate Theatre last week consisted of two ex-Rambert dancers, Jane-Elizabeth Roberts and Gideon Avrahami, in a programme of their own works. Simply but expertly presented to fairly conventional music, and performed with conviction, they ranged from the near-abstract to a satirical piece of mime and a solemn evocation. The strongest works were Roberts's expressive manoeuvres on and around a wooden frame, 'Seclusion,' and Avrahami's eloquent 'Pictures of Chassadic Life.'

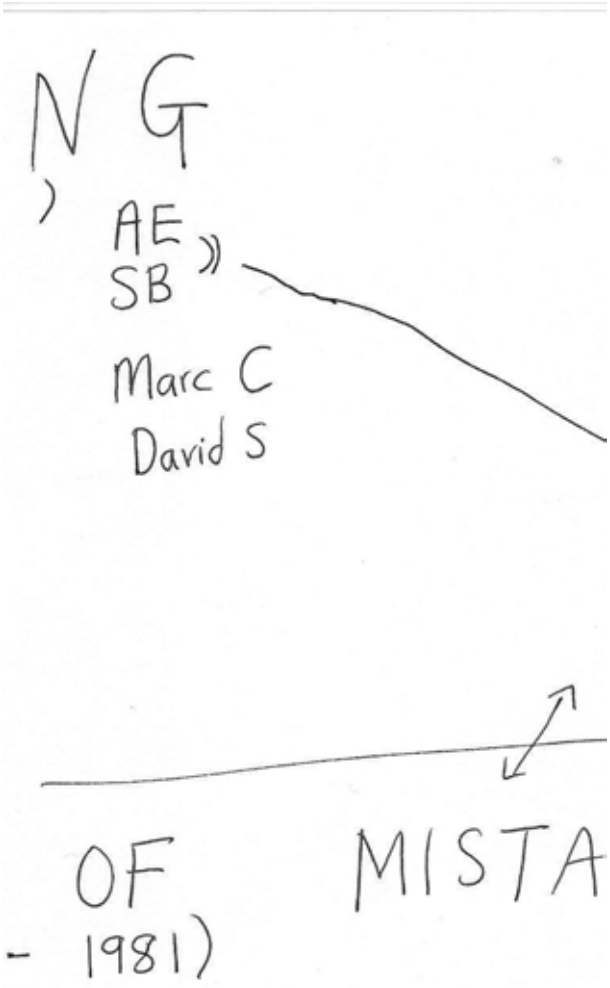
None of them presented much difficulty to anybody used to modern dance, but Anthony Howell's **Ting Theatre of Mistakes** is a deliberate mind-stretcher. He uses natural untrained movements as units in intellectual patterns—an idiom familiar to 'performance artists' and respectable in conceptual art, but rather far out to be labelled as 'dance.' It was at the Slade School of Art recently and the bold-hearted can see it on 16 July at the Art Room, 11 Ascham Street, NW5.

On Tuesday Patricia Ruanne took over the part of Aurora in the Festival Ballet's **Sleeping Beauty** at the Coliseum. She brought to the role a regal elegance which was at its best in the last act, together with a smooth interpretation often reminiscent of Fonteyn's. Manola Asensio was promising, but not yet very stylish in the Bluebird *pas de deux*. Nureyev, in top form, partnered exemplarily and leaped, spun and twisted like a royal salmon.

A. B.

THE OBSERVER REVIEW, SUNDAY 13 JUNE 1976

Curator See: **Michael Craig-Martin** and **Jason E Bowman**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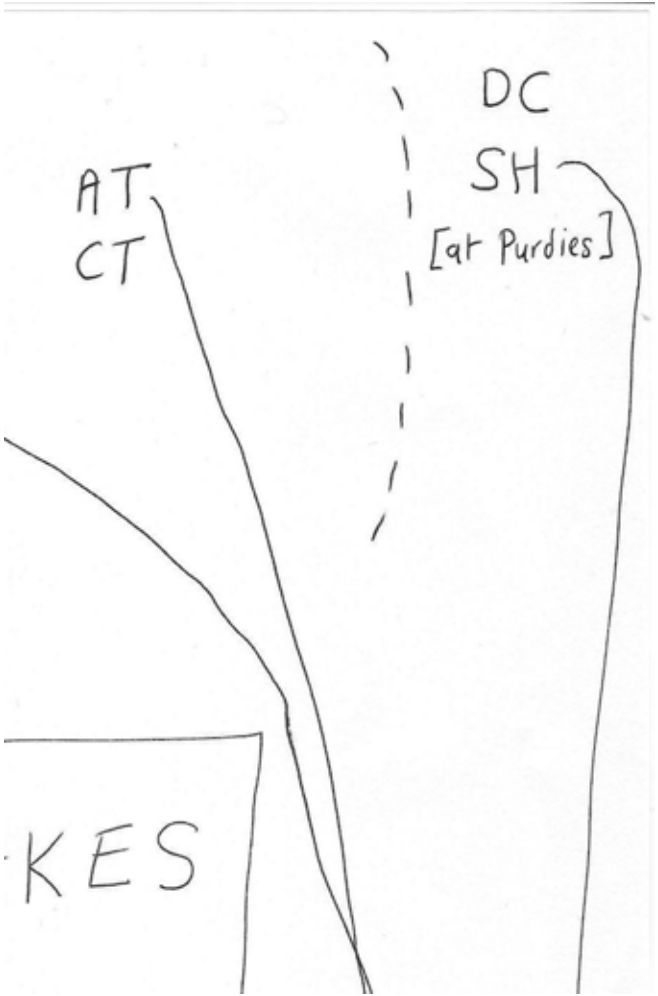
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2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
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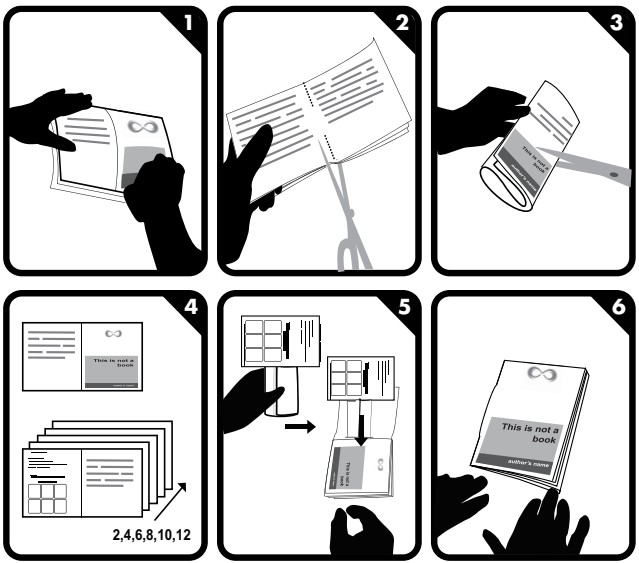


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – D

Marie-Anne Mancio

Dairy, The

Dance

Death

Deborah Howell

Diagrams

Digital Masks

Disappearances

Documentation

Doors

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

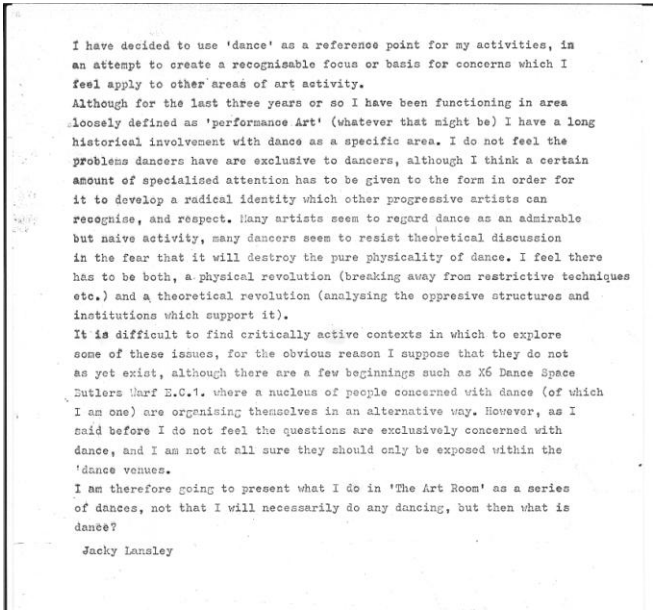
D

Marie-Anne Mancio

Dairy, The (13a Prince of Wales Crescent, London)

A large, 'empty', dilapidated building that was occupied by Space and artists such as Jane Clark; Robert Janz, Annabel Nicholson and the London Film-Makers Co-op [1971-5]. The Ting met here in 1973/4 for workshops.
See also: Anthony McCall

Dance



I have decided to use 'dance' as a reference point for my activities, in an attempt to create a recognisable focus or basis for concerns which I feel apply to other areas of art activity.
Although for the last three years or so I have been functioning in area loosely defined as 'performance Art' (whatever that might be) I have a long historical involvement with dance as a specific area. I do not feel the problems dancers have are exclusive to dancers, although I think a certain amount of specialised attention has to be given to the form in order for it to develop a radical identity which other progressive artists can recognise, and respect. Many artists seem to regard dance as an admirable but naive activity, many dancers seem to resist theoretical discussion in the fear that it will destroy the pure physicality of dance. I feel there has to be both, a physical revolution (breaking away from restrictive techniques etc.) and a theoretical revolution (analysing the oppresive structures and institutions which support it).
It is difficult to find critically active contexts in which to explore some of these issues, for the obvious reason I suppose that they do not as yet exist, although there are a few beginnings such as X6 Dance Space Butlers Wharf E.C.1. where a nucleus of people concerned with dance (of which I am one) are organising themselves in an alternative way. However, as I said before I do not feel the questions are exclusively concerned with dance, and I am not at all sure they should only be exposed within the 'dance venues.
I am therefore going to present what I do in 'The Art Room' as a series of dances, not that I will necessarily do any dancing, but then what is dance?
Jacky Lansley

Statement by Jacky Lansley for the Art Room, c. 1976
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Aside from Anthony Howell's involvement with the Royal Ballet (pre-Ting), The Theatre of Mistakes' interest in the architecture of space and notations of performances, the New Dance scene burgeoning in the UK throughout the 1970s is an important context in which to consider Ting's practice. In its departure from traditional forms and its leanings towards the kinds of minimalist practices embraced by some conceptual artists and musicians, and in its collaborative strategies, it afforded a far better model for making work than traditional theatre.

Inspired by developments in the U.S. such as Judson Dance Theatre, the British radical collective X6 was established by Maedée DuPrès, Emilyn Claid, Mary Prestidge, Jacky Lansley, and Fergus Early, and resident in its own space in empty Butler's Wharf by 1976. Before that, there was the use of intertextuality and interdisciplinarity in the dance company Moving Being; then from 1974-5, Lansley and Sally Potter were the Limited Dance Company, performing choreographies that combined quotidian movements, text, surreal imagery, and a feminist sensibility. There was an interest in performing in public spaces – galleries, schools, parks, pavements, prisons… There was the anti-expressionism of Richard Alston's Strider – a democratically run group where participants could take it in turns to choreograph; there was Mary Fulkerson's anti-technique; Rosemary Butcher's improvisation and instruction-led processes and use of real time, and performance artist Rose English/ film maker Potter's collaborations which subverted gender roles. X6 may have been more politically motivated (seeking to engineer social change) than The Theatre of Mistakes, but there are parallels nevertheless in their methods of devising.
Further reading:
Stephanie Jordan *Striding Out: Aspects of Contemporary and New Dance in Britain*, Dance Books, 1992

Death
Sadly, Michael Greenall is the only member of The Theatre of Mistakes who is no longer alive. His friends and colleagues have all remembered him with great respect and affection.

Deborah Howell, see **Howell, Deborah**

Diagrams

(See also Key for the diagram on the back of this *A-Z*.)

The Theatre of Mistakes' programs/posters often include diagrams relating to the works being performed. These invite the audience to read structurally where they may be used to reading for meaning. Intricate notations of movement, representations of time and space, these 'scores' facilitate recreation of their performances and have become artworks in their own right.
See also: Peter Stickland

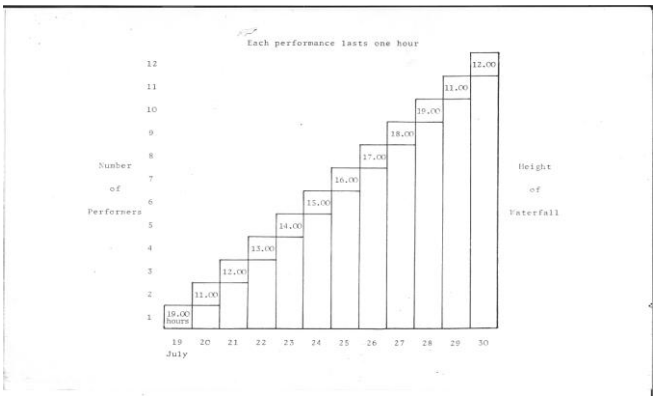


Diagram *Waterfall* (1977) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

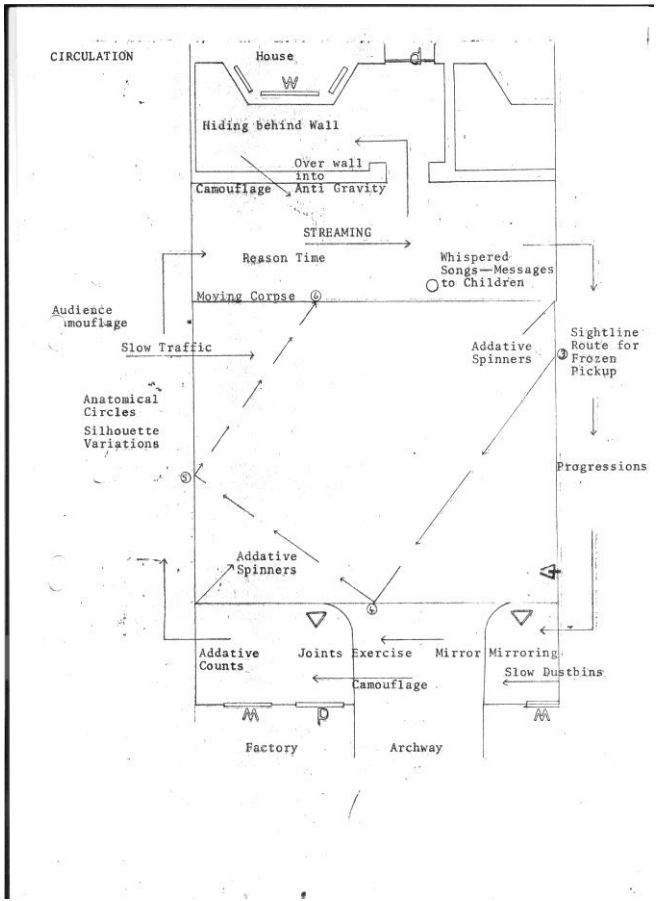


Diagram for *The Street* (1975) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

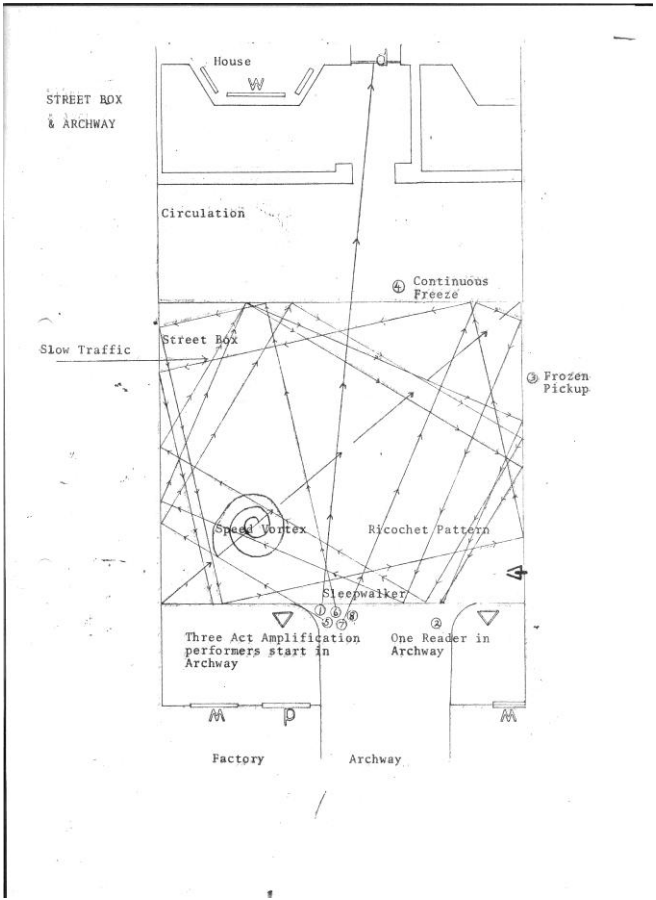


Diagram for *The Street* (1975) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

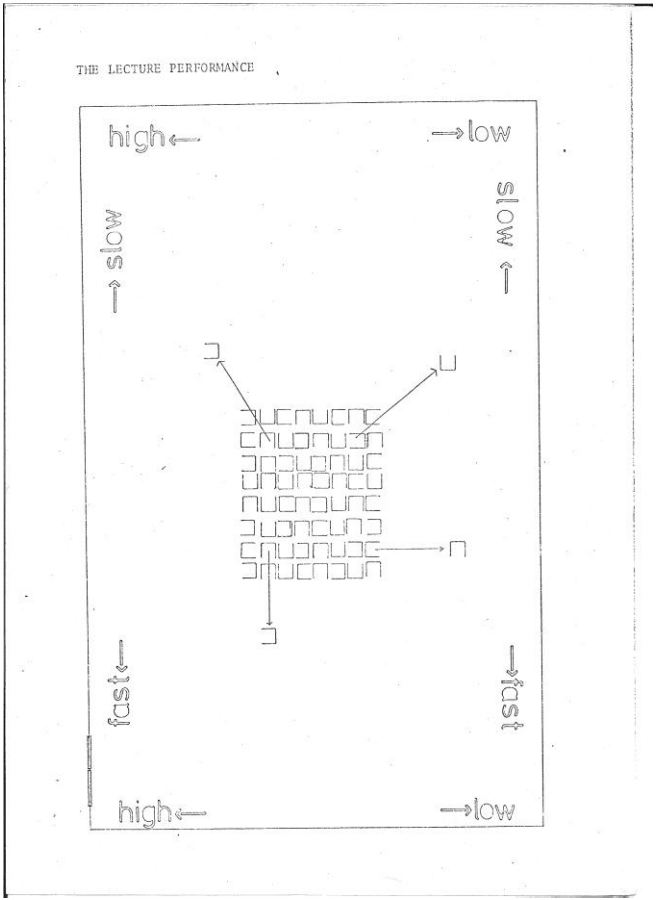


Diagram *Lecture Performance* (1975) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

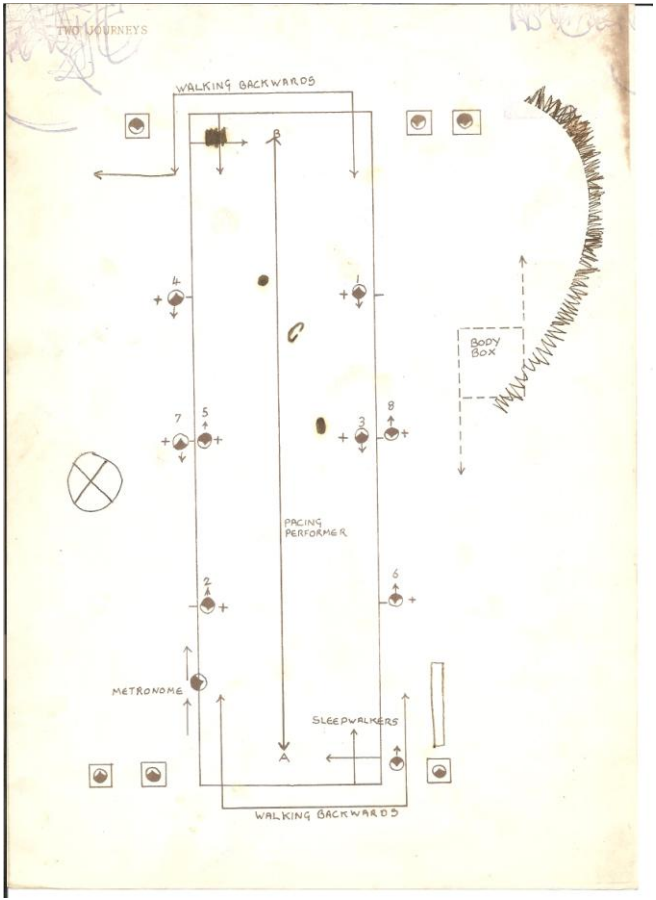


Diagram *Two Journeys* (May, 1976) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

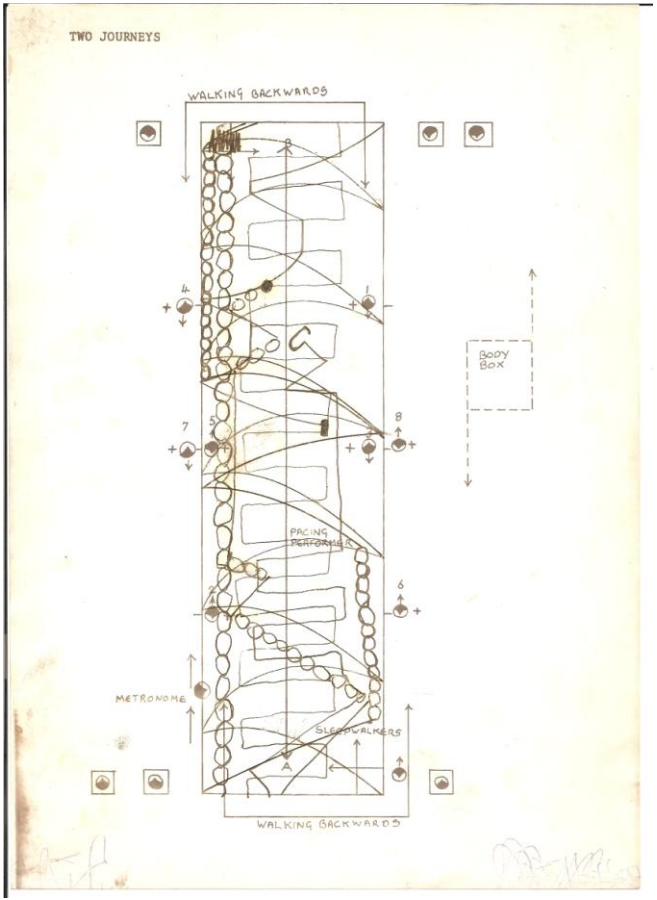


Diagram *Two Journeys* (May, 1976) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

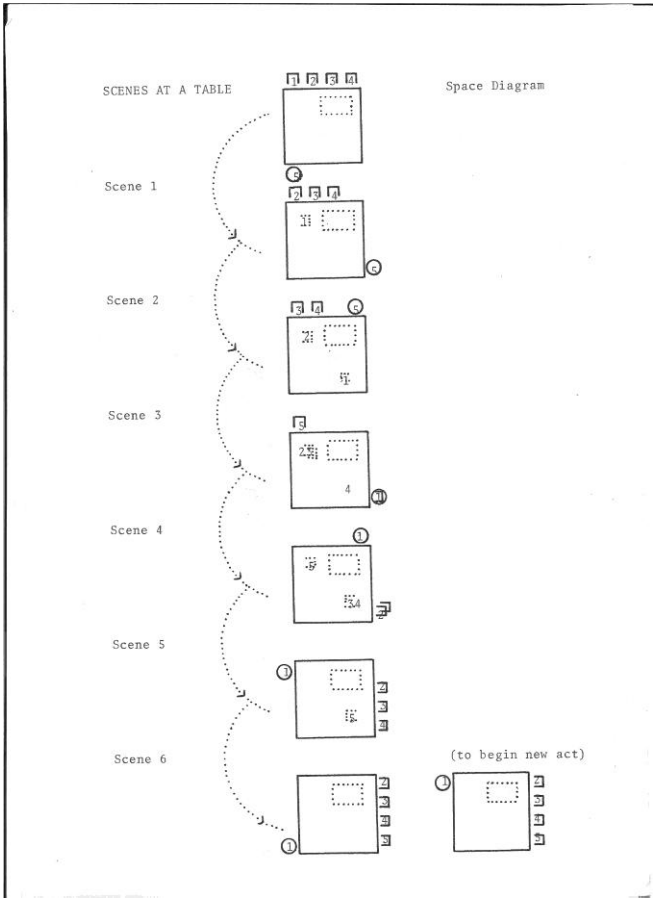


Diagram *Scenes at a Table* ©The Theatre of Mistakes

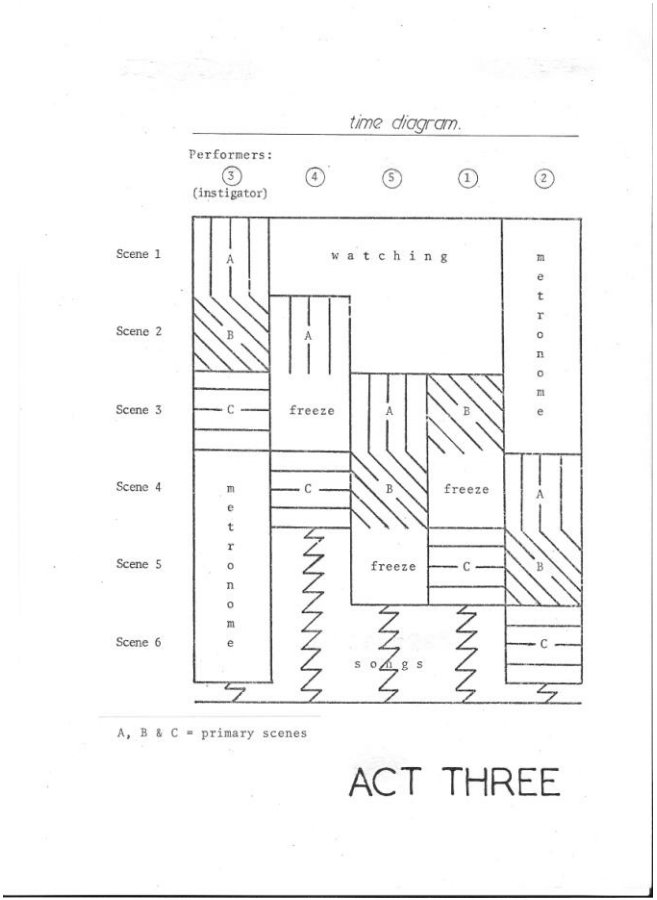
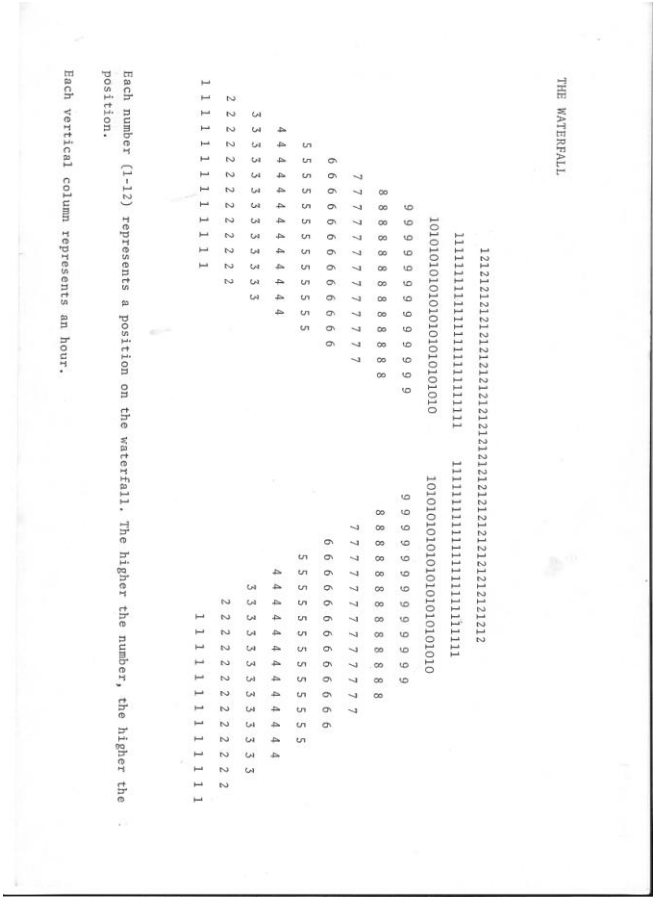


Diagram *Going* (1977) ©The Theatre of Mistakes



THE WATERFALL

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Each number (1-12) represents a position on the waterfall. The higher the number, the higher the position.

Each vertical column represents an hour.

Diagram *Waterfall* (1977) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

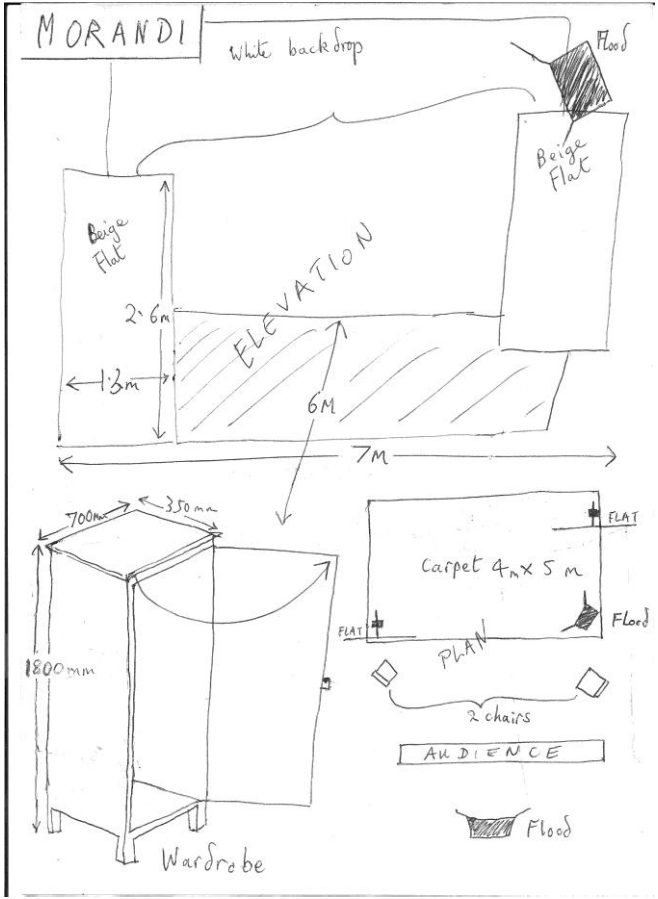


Diagram stage set *Homage to Morandi* ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Digital Masks

DIGITAL MASKS

Employ one or more of the fingers of one hand to create a mask by hiding or distort ing part of the face.

Employ one or more of the fingers of both hands to create a mask in the same manner.

Create a mask in theis manner either for yourself or for another performer or for yourself and another performer.

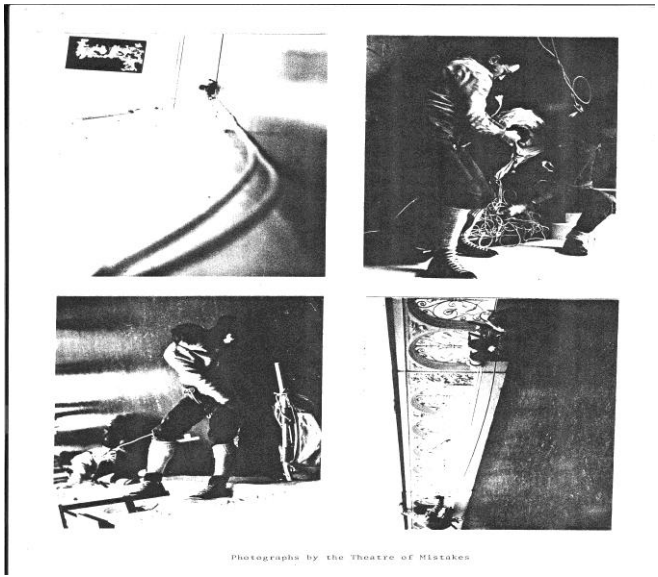
Employ JOINTS EXERCISE to move fingers, hands and arms up to or away from the face. Keep movements crisp, with long pauses between each movement.



Anthony Howell performing *Digital Masks*, one of many exercises from the Gymnasium
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Disappearances…

When questioned, none of the performers could remember the contents of the capsule deposited on the ledge at the end of their performance *Ascent of the Stedelijk* (November 1976). As of 2009, despite the museum's refurbishment and the efforts of the curators, this canister has not been found.



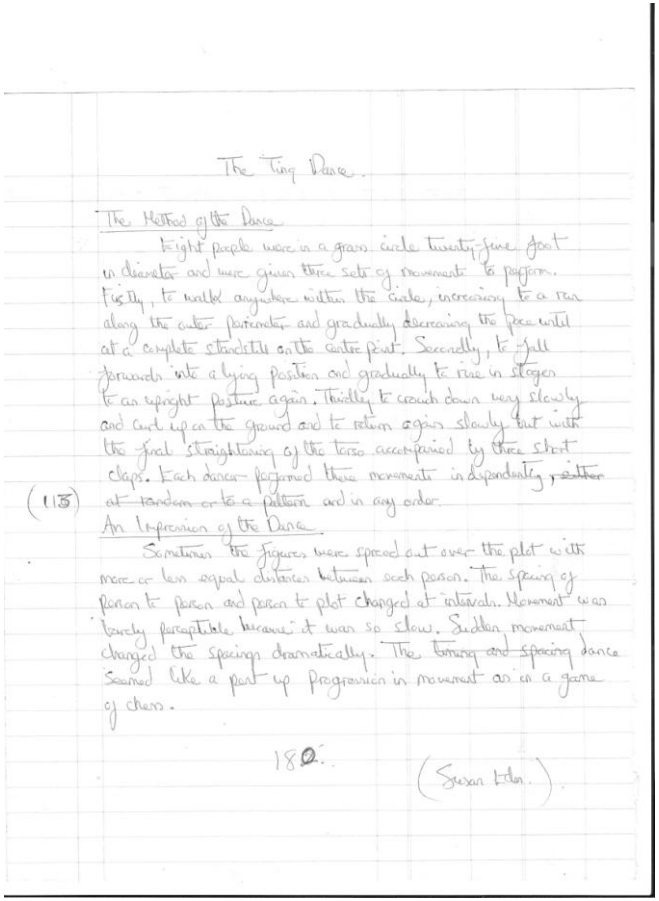
Program *Ascent of the Stedelijk*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Documentation

See also: Critics, Diagrams, Photographers, Soundings

Documentation of events appears to have been important to The Ting and thereafter to The Theatre of Mistakes. Despite the prevailing notion that 1970s performance was an ephemeral artform whose integrity is compromised through the act of recording, The Theatre of Mistakes allocated responsibility for it by defining it as a core group role. In the beginning, this took the form of snapshots and reviews – some handwritten – undertaken by artists of events they had witnessed at Purdies, most probably at Anthony Howell's urging. Later, with the input of Howard Tong and Fiona Templeton, The Theatre of Mistakes' visual language became more sophisticated; exercises were collated and edited into the Elements book; in *Three Act Piece*, for example, photographs were annotated devising a clear notation system for the performance.

Under Mickey Greenall's influence a decorative element was introduced into documentation and under Peter Stickland's, drawings shifted from basic stick figures representing movement and placement to elaborate, technical plans or little sketches that became artworks in their own right. The comb-bound books of *Preparations for Displacement*, *The Street,* and *Waterfall* progressed to published, illustrated scripts (see Bibliography) their publication still largely self-funded. Individual members' commitment to contributing to, preserving, and storing The Theatre of Mistakes Archive also attests to a collective recognition of documentation as a perpetuation rather than negation of the live moment.



The Ting Dance.

The Method of the Dance

Eight people were in a grass circle twenty-four feet in diameter and were given three sets of movements to perform. Firstly, to walk anywhere within the circle, increasing to a run along the outer perimeter and gradually decreasing the pace until at a complete standstill on the centre point. Secondly, to fall forwards into a lying position and gradually to rise in stages to an upright posture again. Thirdly to crouch down very slowly and curl up on the ground and to return again slowly but with the final straightening of the torso accompanied by three short claps. Each dancer performed these movements independently, ~~neither~~ at random or to a pattern and in any order.

(113)

An Impression of the Dance

Sometimes the figures were spread out over the plot with more or less equal distances between each person. The spacing of person to person and person to plot changed at intervals. Movement was barely perceptible because it was so slow. Sudden movement charged the spacings dramatically. The timing and spacing dance seemed like a part up Progression in movement as in a game of chess.

180.

(Susan Eden.)

Susan [Bonvin] Eden reviews The Ting Dance, Aug 1974
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

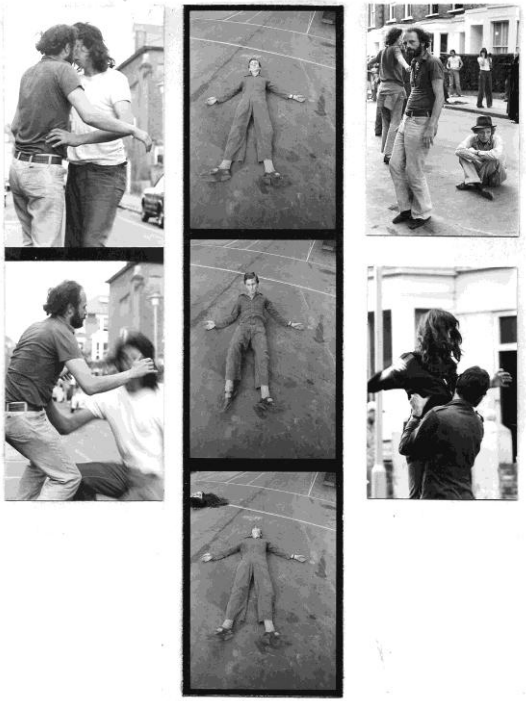


Performance: STREET BOX performers fallen, CIRCULATION performer rising, at OVERALL TRIGGER.



Performance: STREET BOX—performer AMPLIFYING photographer.

Documentation of *The Street* (1975) was very thorough. As well as the numerous diagrams and photographs (some with captions), the whole was organised into comb-bound books for sale.

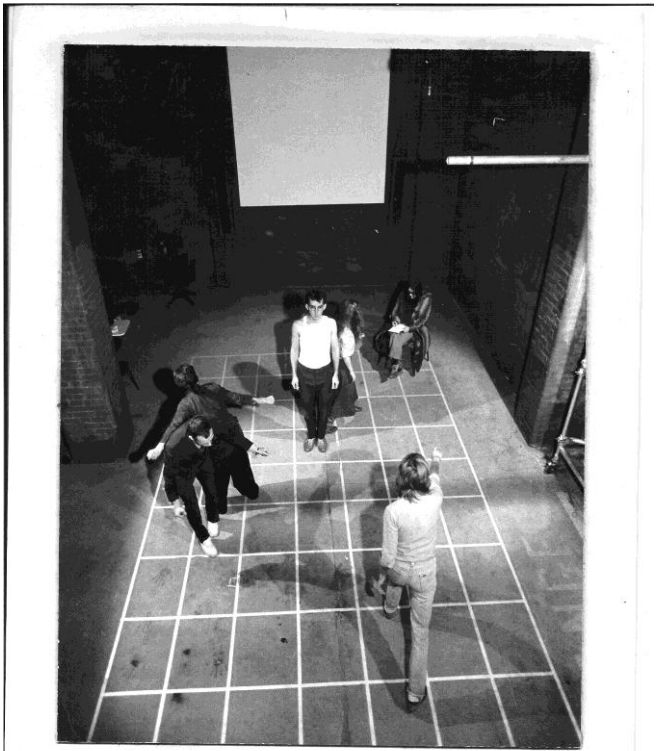


THE STREET: Performance, July 1975: Street Box

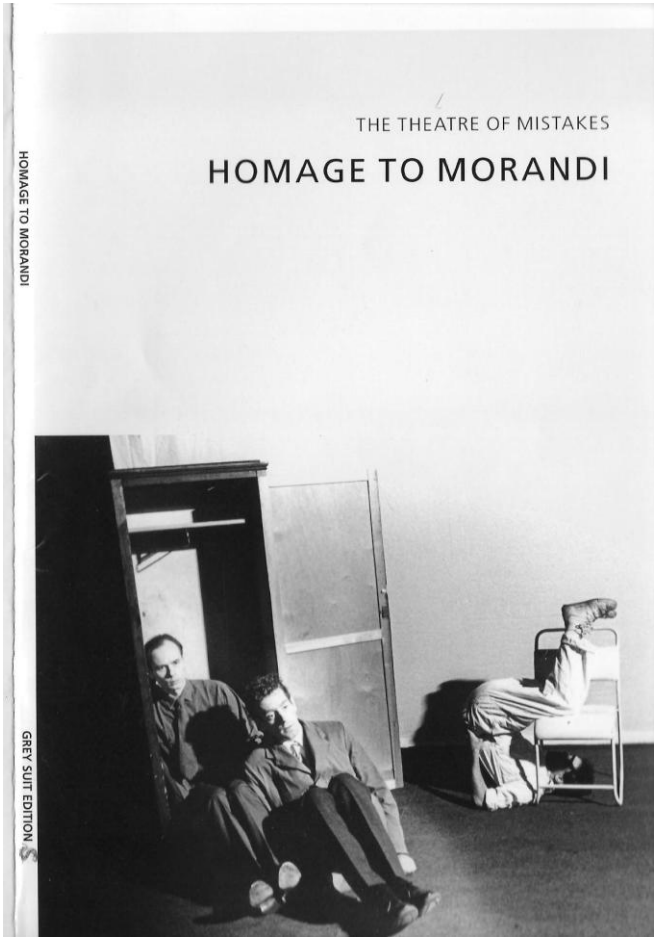
Documentation of *The Street* showing movement sequences.



Two Journeys at the Slade, Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



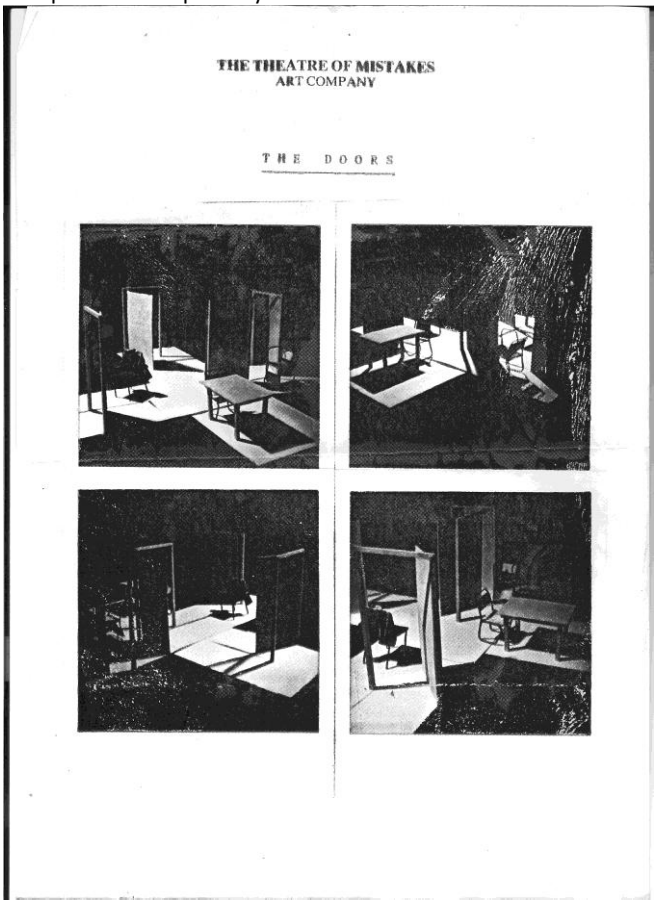
4.
The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes.
'Three Act Piece' at The London Exhibition, Covent Garden, Oct. 1975: Blindfold Performer, Speed Times Performers moving backwards, Grid for the orientation of backwards moving Performers, Reader composing Extending Sentence during performance.



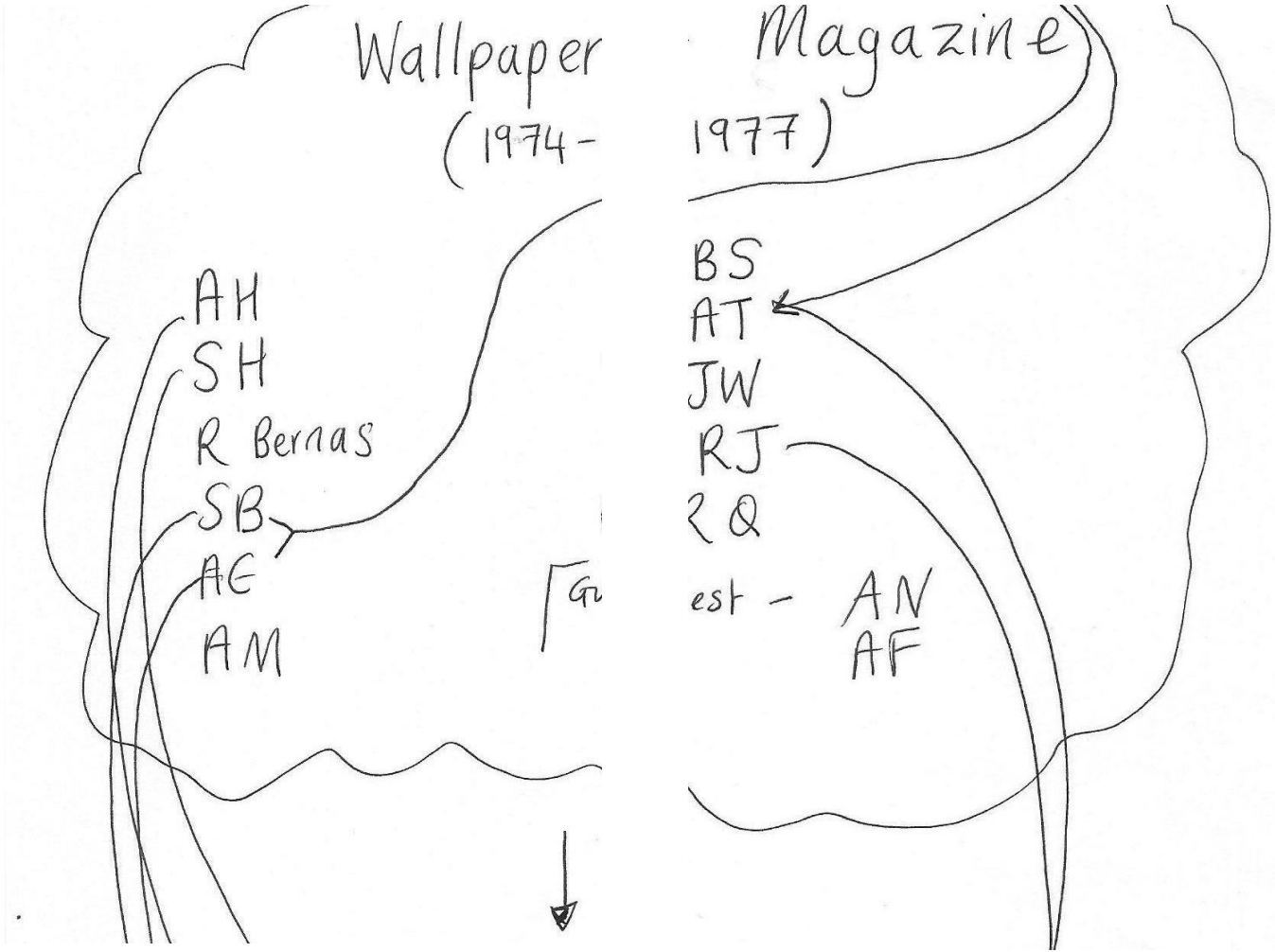
Script available to order from Amazon, Grey Suit, or 77books.co.uk ISBN no 1903 006 015

The Doors

Late performance piece by The Theatre of Mistakes.



Flyer courtesy of Fiona Templeton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2009-09-03

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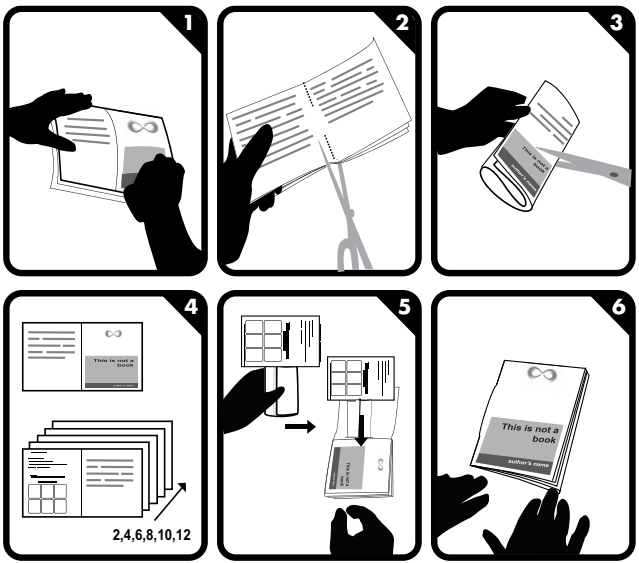
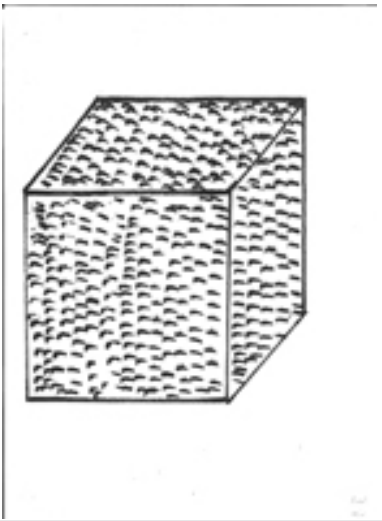


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – E

Marie-Anne Mancio

Economics

Eden, Andrew

Eden, Susan

Elements of Performance Art

Empirical

Endings

Englishness

Ephemeral

Essora Tessorio

Exercises

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

E

Marie-Anne Mancio

Economics

See also: Victoria Chick, Funding, Samovar

The Ting's adherence to Minimalism was due in part to lack of funds so it is not surprising its aesthetic developed out of the quotidian. Kilims Signe Lie Howell and Anthony Howell brought back from their travels were deployed as props; the vehicles people drove to Purdies farm were the substance of Amikam Toren's *Ballet for Cars*; Lie's pregnancy inspired *Birth Ballet Chorale* (1974) performed by pregnant "ladies;" performers were told to wear whatever black clothes they owned; and later *The Street* (1975) was, literally, on the doorstep. Costumes were retrieved from donations and army surplus stores. Howard Tong recalls everyone having to change into his aviator suit to be photographed for the publicity information about Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes.

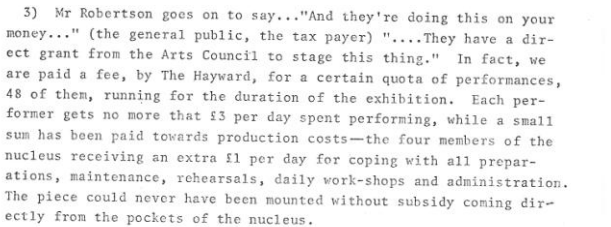


The Ting, early workshop, nd, c.1974
Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Cf Andrew Eden on *Box Installation* at Purdies farm, August 1974:
"Anthony said: would you like to have a field? But there was no possibility of *any* materials of any kind *at all*. So it was literally Anthony and me going along to the supermarket and seeing what we could get."
(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008).



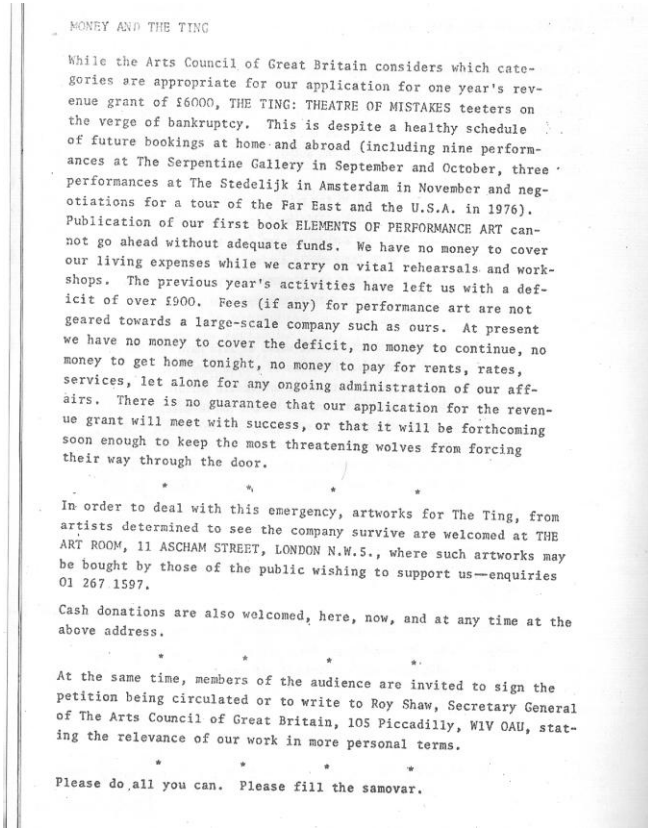
Poster left at performance spaces c.1975/6, Theatre of Mistakes Archive



3) Mr Robertson goes on to say..."And they're doing this on your money..." (the general public, the tax payer) "....They have a direct grant from the Arts Council to stage this thing." In fact, we are paid a fee, by The Hayward, for a certain quota of performances, 48 of them, running for the duration of the exhibition. Each performer gets no more that £3 per day spent performing, while a small sum has been paid towards production costs—the four members of the nucleus receiving an extra £1 per day for coping with all preparations, maintenance, rehearsals, daily work-shops and administration. The piece could never have been mounted without subsidy coming directly from the pockets of the nucleus.

Letter dated 16th Aug 1977 from Anthony Howell to BBC re treatment of The Theatre of Mistakes in Fyffe Robertson's 'Robbie' which aired the previous night on BBC1 at 8.30pm. See also: Audiences

Finances were a continual struggle for The Theatre of Mistakes:



MONEY AND THE TING

While the Arts Council of Great Britain considers which categories are appropriate for our application for one year's revenue grant of £6000, THE TING: THEATRE OF MISTAKES teeters on the verge of bankruptcy. This is despite a healthy schedule of future bookings at home and abroad (including nine performances at The Serpentine Gallery in September and October, three performances at The Stedelijk in Amsterdam in November and negotiations for a tour of the Far East and the U.S.A. in 1976). Publication of our first book ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE ART cannot go ahead without adequate funds. We have no money to cover our living expenses while we carry on vital rehearsals and workshops. The previous year's activities have left us with a deficit of over £900. Fees (if any) for performance art are not geared towards a large-scale company such as ours. At present we have no money to cover the deficit, no money to continue, no money to get home tonight, no money to pay for rents, rates, services, let alone for any ongoing administration of our affairs. There is no guarantee that our application for the revenue grant will meet with success, or that it will be forthcoming soon enough to keep the most threatening wolves from forcing their way through the door.

* * * *

In order to deal with this emergency, artworks for The Ting, from artists determined to see the company survive are welcomed at THE ART ROOM, 11 ASCHAM STREET, LONDON N.W.5., where such artworks may be bought by those of the public wishing to support us—enquiries 01 267 1597.

Cash donations are also welcomed, here, now, and at any time at the above address.

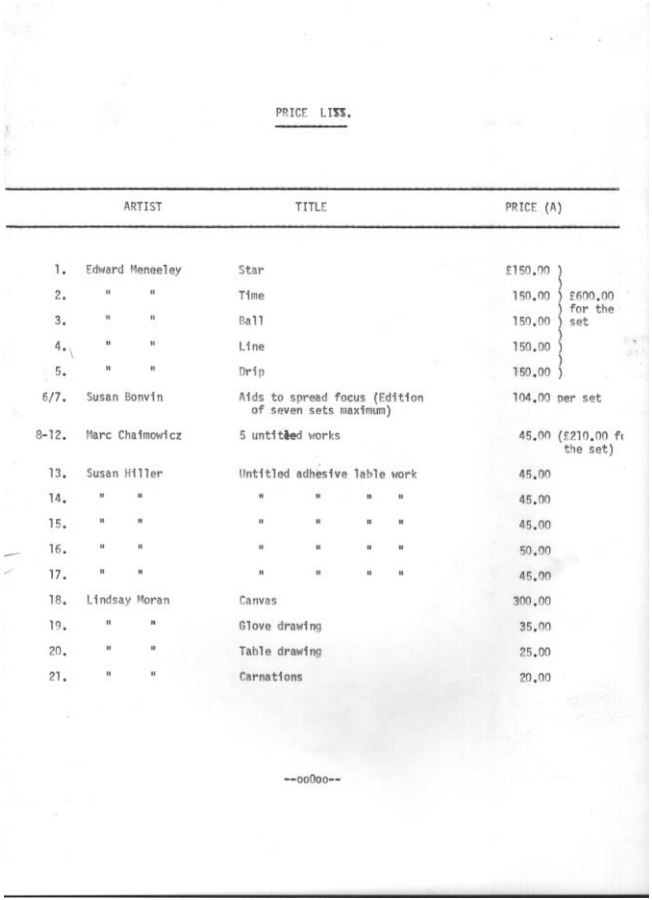
* * * *

At the same time, members of the audience are invited to sign the petition being circulated or to write to Roy Shaw, Secretary General of The Arts Council of Great Britain, 105 Piccadilly, W1V 0AU, stating the relevance of our work in more personal terms.

* * * *

Please do all you can. Please fill the samovar.

Excerpt from Program *Two Journeys* (1976)
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



PRICE LISTS.

	ARTIST	TITLE	PRICE (A)	
1.	Edward Meneeley	Star	£150.00	
2.	" "	Time	150.00	£600.00 for the set
3.	" "	Ball	150.00	
4.	" "	Line	150.00	
5.	" "	Drip	150.00	
6/7.	Susan Bonvin	Aids to spread focus (Edition of seven sets maximum)	104.00	per set
8-12.	Marc Chaimowicz	5 untitled works	45.00	(£210.00 f the set)
13.	Susan Hiller	Untitled adhesive lable work	45.00	
14.	" "	" " " "	45.00	
15.	" "	" " " "	45.00	
16.	" "	" " " "	50.00	
17.	" "	" " " "	45.00	
18.	Lindsay Moran	Canvas	300.00	
19.	" "	Glove drawing	35.00	
20.	" "	Table drawing	25.00	
21.	" "	Carnations	20.00	

--ooOoo--

Price List for The Art Room, 1976
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

5

Anthony Howell: Application for a major Bursary

C/ The Theatre of Mistakes

While the best work of the Company has been presented with great success in New York and in most countries in Europe, the London public has never had a chance to see GOING, our best work to date. So I would like to bring the Company to London for a two week season in the Spring of 1980, to show GOING and The DOORS, either at Riverside or perhaps at the Royal Court and/or at an Arts Council venue, and, if the Arts Council will help organise this, we will tour these pieces to other Arts Council venues in England.

This will require a two month rehearsal period with salaries for six performers, as well as salaries while we are performing. Revival of the Company will also require a fair amount of planning and paperwork for which a manager or one of the company will require payment. We will also require funds for costumes, materials, office materials etc. — to say nothing of publicity.

Since 1977 the Company has received £3500 from the Arts Council which when divided between 6 performers worked out as a grant of £290 per person per annum (roughly £5 a week). This was absurd — and led to the company being forced to disband at the end of 1978. I am still paying off debts the Company incurred during this period and am not prepared to revive the Company under similar circumstances, a) because it creates emotional tension to the detriment of the work b) because my performers deserve more respect - since each of them is a brilliant artist in his or her own right, each having worked in performance with great intensity for the last five years.

It should be born in mind that the final dissolution of the company does not just make one gap in the British performance art scene since it was the decision of 6 performance artists to work together 5 years ago which created the company and its quality

Letter from Anthony Howell with Application to Arts Council for funding 20th July 1978, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Eden, Andrew



Andrew Eden *Cardboard Boxes* at Purdies farm, 1974



Photos ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

to see an exact sequence of all white rectangles changing to white and yellow – yellow and blue – blue and white. One step makes all the difference. The chalky colours seemed both artificial and natural – dusty August sky, colours as though sections of the sky had landed in the field. It reminded me of those displaced cubes of sky in Magritte's pictures.

Extract from Amanda Welch's review of *Cardboard Boxes*
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Long-time friend of Anthony Howell, artist Andrew Eden was involved in *From Where to Where* "a verbal and visual event" with him in May 1974 (Hampstead Heath) and was always aware of the activities of The Ting. He was also one of the founder/editors of *Wallpaper* and took part in *Summer Pieces*.

CUBE, PYRAMID AND SPHERE

Three dimensional shapes drawn by means of map references and addresses in London. Corners, centres apices ranging from the top of the post office tower to the deepest point on London's underground, from the Serpentine to the ponds on Hampstead Heath. Where possible, these corners, centres and apices will be indicated in their actual situation. Planes and curves will also be indicated where possible.

A poster to be produced with addresses and map references, tracing a journey along the edges of these solids and of chosen latitudes of the sphere. Also a folded sheet to be distributed by post.

Extract from notes for *Summer Pieces*, 20th June-20th July 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



In 1977, he and his wife Susan Bonvin were part of OnSite, a group show at Arnolfini, Bristol, 3rd – 29th October 1977. The others included several artists who had been present for the August 1974 weekend at Purdies farm: Jane Clark, Susan Hiller, Robert Janz, and Amikam Toren.

Eden and Bonvin are currently working collaboratively on a series of paintings.

For a biography of Eden, see his profile at
http://www.axisweb.org/seCVFU.aspx?ARTISTID=9438

Further reading: www.susanbonvin-andreweden.co.uk

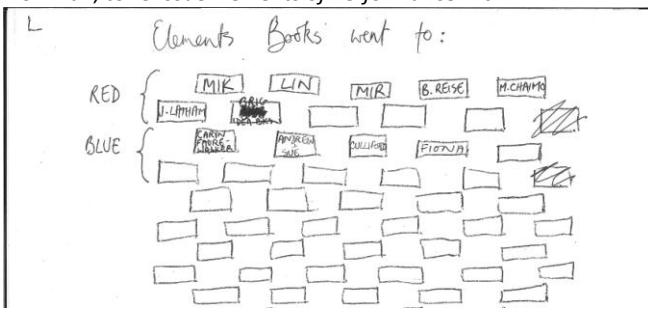
See also: Bibliography, Economics, Letters, Manifesto, *One Rule Game*, Ting, View, Union

Eden, Susan: See **Bonvin, Susan**

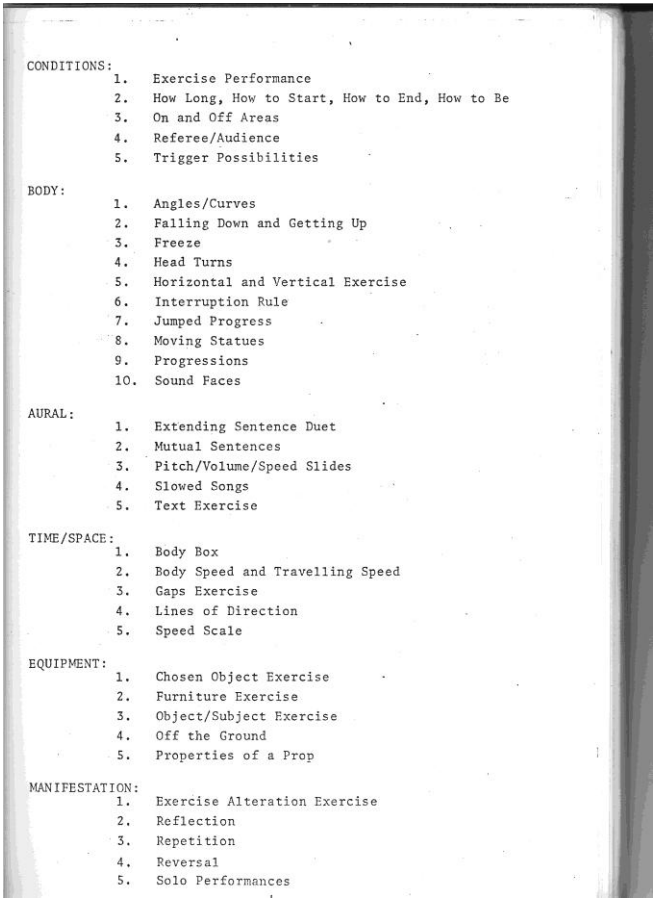
Elements of Performance Art

"Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton's *Elements of Performance* (refined by activities developed via *The Gymnasium* from 1974-76) was self-published and distributed by Ting in 1976 in an initial edition of 60. Offering a unique insight into how Ting advocated performance art be created via instruction and chance with cross-disciplinary activities, it remains an out-of-print seminal publication as a hybrid manifesto/manual. The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes' methods of production are outlined in the publication against six elements: conditions, body, aural, time/space, equipment and manifestation with a total of 42 exercises; to be structured via chance allowing for multiple formations and convergent structures."
(Jason E Bowman "Accidentally on Purpose, The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes, Towards A Retrospective" PSI15, Zagreb, June 2009)

Though currently out of print, there are plans, instigated by Jason E Bowman, to re-issue *Elements of Performance Art.*



Extract of Diagram found in The Theatre of Mistakes Archive regarding distribution of the *Elements* book



CONDITIONS:
1. Exercise Performance
2. How Long, How to Start, How to End, How to Be
3. On and Off Areas
4. Referee/Audience
5. Trigger Possibilities

BODY:
1. Angles/Curves
2. Falling Down and Getting Up
3. Freeze
4. Head Turns
5. Horizontal and Vertical Exercise
6. Interruption Rule
7. Jumped Progress
8. Moving Statues
9. Progressions
10. Sound Faces

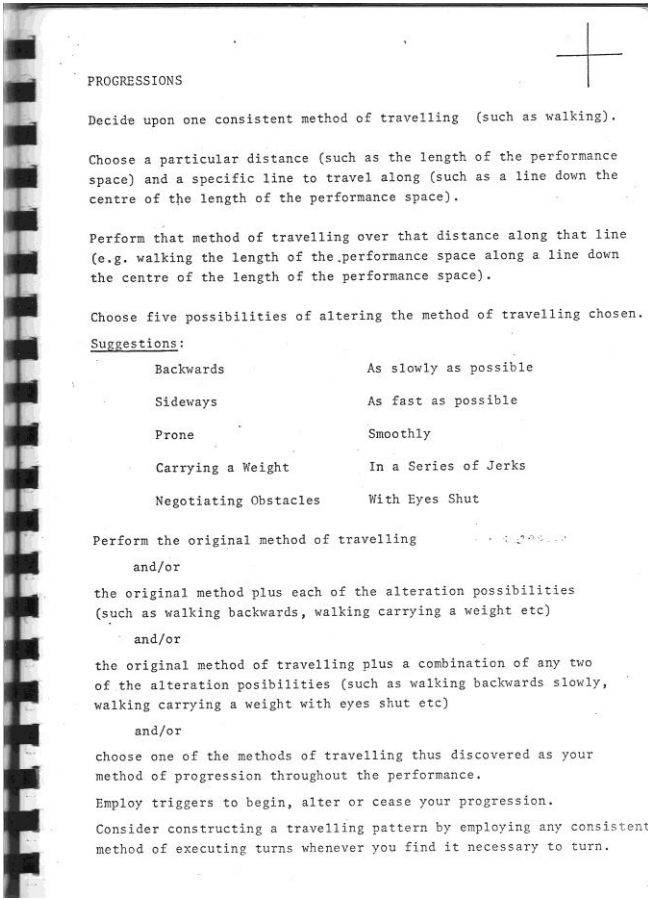
AURAL:
1. Extending Sentence Duet
2. Mutual Sentences
3. Pitch/Volume/Speed Slides
4. Slowed Songs
5. Text Exercise

TIME/SPACE:
1. Body Box
2. Body Speed and Travelling Speed
3. Gaps Exercise
4. Lines of Direction
5. Speed Scale

EQUIPMENT:
1. Chosen Object Exercise
2. Furniture Exercise
3. Object/Subject Exercise
4. Off the Ground
5. Properties of a Prop

MANIFESTATION:
1. Exercise Alteration Exercise
2. Reflection
3. Repetition
4. Reversal
5. Solo Performances

©Fiona Templeton and Anthony Howell *Elements of Performance Art* (1976), Contents



PROGRESSIONS

Decide upon one consistent method of travelling (such as walking).

Choose a particular distance (such as the length of the performance space) and a specific line to travel along (such as a line down the centre of the length of the performance space).

Perform that method of travelling over that distance along that line (e.g. walking the length of the performance space along a line down the centre of the length of the performance space).

Choose five possibilities of altering the method of travelling chosen.

Suggestions:

Backwards	As slowly as possible
Sideways	As fast as possible
Prone	Smoothly
Carrying a Weight	In a Series of Jerks
Negotiating Obstacles	With Eyes Shut

Perform the original method of travelling

and/or

the original method plus each of the alteration possibilities (such as walking backwards, walking carrying a weight etc)

and/or

the original method of travelling plus a combination of any two of the alteration posibilities (such as walking backwards slowly, walking carrying a weight with eyes shut etc)

and/or

choose one of the methods of travelling thus discovered as your method of progression throughout the performance.

Employ triggers to begin, alter or cease your progression.

Consider constructing a travelling pattern by employing any consistent method of executing turns whenever you find it necessary to turn.

© A. Howell & F. Templeton *Elements of Performance Art* (1976)

Empirical

This text, this *A-Z* of The Theatre of Mistakes, seeks to reflect the nature of the conversations in which I participated for the purpose of complementing the research strategies of curator Jason E Bowman. Conversations held in a variety of venues and situations – some formal, some social; which began via email, over the telephone, in an airy tango studio in North London, in a café on Manhattan's Lower East Side, in the calm of university rooms, at the top of the escalators in Liverpool Street Station. Conversations which continued in a studio in Peterborough, in the fronts of cars, in the bar at the Battersea Arts Centre after a performance of Station House Opera's *Mind Out*, over dinner in a converted warehouse on Brick Lane and coffee in a quiet Herne Hill restaurant, in a small, temporary art space in Shoreditch, on the steps of London's National Gallery, in a yellow house in Oslo, after too many glasses of Prosecco in Soho's French House…

Conversations which ranged from precise recollections complete with corroborated dates to vaguer memories which failed to allocate names or sites to moments half-revived, semi-forgotten.

Treating each interviewee's impressions of their involvement with The Theatre of Mistakes – whether as spectator or participant, regardless of the longevity of that experience – with equal importance, *The Theatre of Mistakes: an A-Z* explores the *possible* as opposed to the definitive as a valid tool in the creation of a multi-perspectival narrative. As such, it is not exhaustive, is far from complete. Nor does it see completion as a desirable aim. Rather, it hopes to instigate more questions, provoke more memories, more contradictions, rather in the manner of gossip.

See also: Questions, Unattributed

Endings

The rules governing The Theatre of Mistakes' performances meant endings were unpredictable unless operating within previously specified time constraints. In theory, some performances could finish within a few moments of starting (depending on triggers) and Peter Stickland recalls Fiona Templeton's integrity in this matter; she had no qualms in seeing the rule to its conclusion even if it meant the performance was only 3 minutes long. Conversely, there were structures that were deliberately open-ended, infinite. In the preface to the script of *Going* – the first fully rehearsed 'play' – for instance, various options for endings are suggested.



Going, the endless performance

Then there is the bigger ending. Why did The Theatre of Mistakes disband?

There were no mutual, considered decisions as such. It appears "everything fell apart in New York" (unattributed) after *Going* toured there in 1978. Anthony Howell wanted to go home; Templeton stayed on to pursue her own projects; Glenys Johnson was at the point of wishing to further her painting; Mickey Greenall was "exploring the S&M scene" (unattributed); Miranda Payne was still drifting; Stickland was still interested in The Theatre of Mistakes. Despite continuing in some form for a further 3 years (the least 'successful' work of that period probably being *Orpheus and Hermes*, the most being *Homage to Morandi*), the group fragmented, eventually disbanding in 1981. Individual members have resurrected works (Howell did several smaller versions of *Waterfall*; see Templeton for *Coming* (*with Going*); Stickland prepared scripts of *Going* and *Homage to Morandi* for publication; all have lectured on The Theatre of Mistakes) but, as of 2009, have not re-performed altogether.

Englishness

Active Circles
Cricket whites
Eccentricity (see Deborah Howell)
Hartley Wintney
August bank holidays
The dole

"Theatre of Mistakes had a very American, New York aesthetic, in one sense. But it had a curious English public school touch to it as well. I was always wearing cricket clothes or something daft – grey suits"
(Julian Maynard Smith in www.vizlang.co.uk/readings/Smith)



Mickey Greenall, Anthony Howell, and Fiona Templeton in *Going*
Photos ©The Theatre of Mistakes



Fiona Templeton, Glenys Johnson, Peter Stickland, Mickey Greenall in *Going*



Rehearsal/performance of *Waterfall* Hartley Wintney, Summer 1977
Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

The Theatre of Mistakes is divided as to their 'Englishness'. For Peter Stickland, their aesthetic can only have grown out of its context – its language, that particular brand of eccentricity, its (comical) approach to physicality that passes for Englishness. For Fiona Templeton, the work transcended that but then perhaps her perspective is informed by her history of practising on both sides of the Atlantic. Either way, it appears The Theatre of Mistakes was best received elsewhere in Europe (*cf* the artist Alan Charlton, the film maker/artist Peter Greenaway). As Anthony Howell notes, the literary tradition in English theatre made performance art unpopular with critics.

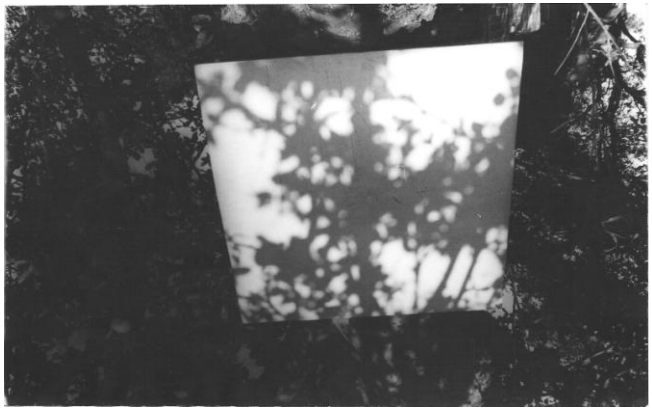
Ephemeral

Performances, shadows, sunlight, scratches of chalk; Robert Janz walks through New York City streets and along London pavements; Jane Clark films water; Susan Hiller maps dreams…

"It's appropriate now to work on the authentic form of those phenomena that erase themselves, that go through a complete cycle of changes from birth to death […] I would like my work to exist within the life cycles of the natural things that come into being around us."

Robert Janz in the draft of a Press release by Anthony Howell for *Summer Pieces*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

See also: Documentation, Purdies, and for filmmakers Anthony McCall and Annabel Nicholson's connection to expanded cinema read Lucas Ihlein "Pre-digital New Media Art" *RealTime Arts* no. 66, April/May, 2005, 26 for a discussion of work from the Seventies.



The ever-contentious relationship between performance and documentation asks whether a death occurs between the ephemeral moment and the permanent record…



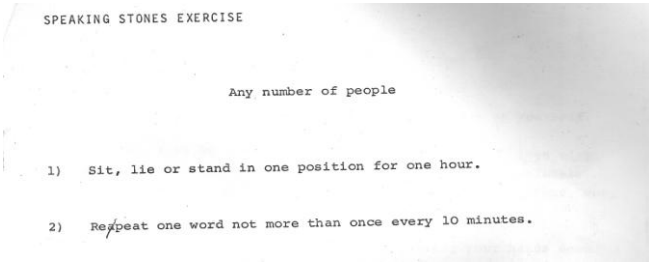
Essora Tessorio (17th June, 1973 at the Whitechapel)
See also: Venues
Though this event prefigured Ting, the act of Signe Lie Howell reading out Anthony Howell's poetry is indicative of their future collaboration. Victoria Chick recalls it was very well received; the phrase that she still remembers:

Cold ocean cold ocean cold ocean cold ocean
(Interview: Victoria Chick, London, 4th Nov 2008)

Exercises
Fiona Templeton played a major role in editing exercises from the Gymnasium into the book *Elements of Performance Art*. Though exercises are mostly undated, at least a couple – *Sleepwalkers* and *Lightning Spinners* – were performed in October 1974. Others include *Body Aural Couplets* (February-December 1975); *Digital Masks* (February 1975), Dynamic *Camouflage* (June 1975) *Slow Traffic* (June 1975), *Amplification* (July 1975)

Sleepwalkers
Progress to Reverse* or *Tidal Drag
Walking Circle Forwards
Joints Exercise/Anatomical Exercise
Three Movements Exercise
Ultimate Rope Trick
Brisk Intervals
Universal/Dinka Jumps in the Circle
Lightning Spinners
Finger Heat Exercise
Sticks
First Conversation Piece
Marionettes Verbal

Nine Units Exercise
Triples
Metronome, Stick, Chairs
Total Drag
Far and Near Soliloquy



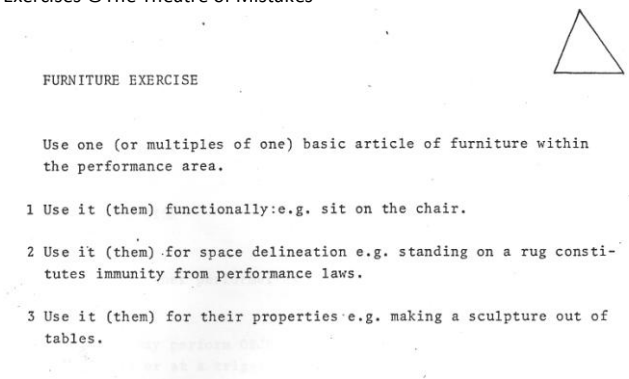
SPEAKING STONES EXERCISE

Any number of people

1) Sit, lie or stand in one position for one hour.

2) Repeat one word not more than once every 10 minutes.

Exercises ©The Theatre of Mistakes



FURNITURE EXERCISE

Use one (or multiples of one) basic article of furniture within the performance area.

1 Use it (them) functionally:e.g. sit on the chair.

2 Use it (them) for space delineation e.g. standing on a rug constitutes immunity from performance laws.

3 Use it (them) for their properties e.g. making a sculpture out of tables.

SLEEPWALKERS

One couple or more.

Each performer stands at the edge of the performance space. Raise arms from sides and walk directly across/along the performance space. When the opposite side is reached, lower your arms, turn round, move one pace along the edge.

Again raise arms from sides and walk across/along performance space. Continue sleepwalking thus. When a corner of the performance space is reached start sleepwalking along the other two edges.



Whenever opposite another performer walk towards each other at the same speed. When you meet (still with hands outstretched in front of you) place hands on each others shoulders. Stand like this for five minutes. Then slowly revolve anti-clockwise once. As you both start to revolve, start making a scarcely audible noise which gradually grows louder. The noise stops abruptly as soon as the anti-clockwise revolution is completed (i.e. when both performers cease moving). Each step a pace to the left, without dropping arms. Now continue on your way, sleepwalking towards the opposite edge.

Always perform a complete revolution with your partner, ending the revolution in the same position as you began.

Should you come across an obstacle in your sleepwalking, turn at 90 degrees and then continue in the new direction.

© A. Howell & F. Templeton *Elements of Performance Art* (1976)



OFF THE GROUND

Use any means of getting off the ground

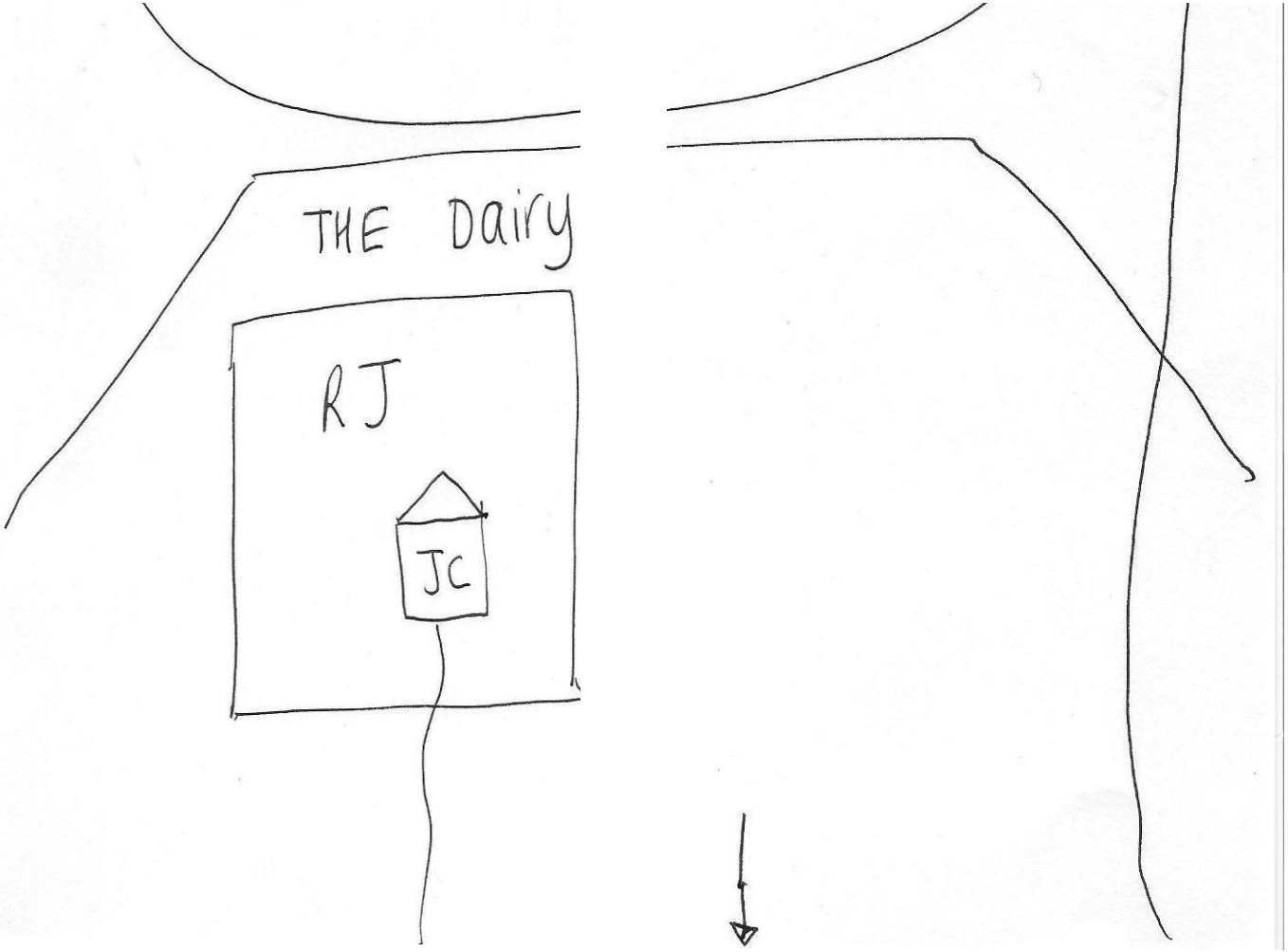
for a moment at a time e.g. by jumping
by using delicately balanced equipment such as a stick

for a short time e.g. by being supported by another performer
by using equipment that is difficult to balance on such as a ball
by using equipment that requires an effort such as holding on to it
by using equipment that is gradually dismantled

for a long time e.g. by using a permanently raised part of the performance area
by using equipment that is solid and stable
by using equipment that is gradually built.

This exercise may be applied by a performer who is moving freely as a sculptor to performers that he or she is using as objects.

© A. Howell & F. Templeton *Elements of Performance Art* (1976)


THE Dairy
RJ
JC

2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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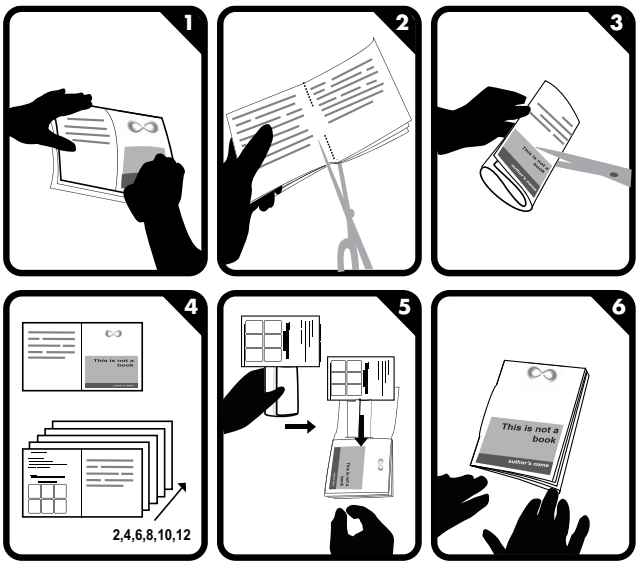


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – F & G

Marie-Anne Mancio

Fantasy
Feminism
Fiona Templeton
Fire

Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session

Fiver Show
Four Artists
Free Sessions
Fuchs, Alan

Games
Going
Goldfish
Gossip

Gravity

Greenall, Michael (Mickey/Mike/Mik)
Grey Suit Editions
Grids

Gymnasium

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

F-G

Marie-Anne Mancio

Fantasy

A WOMAN CALLED MAYLA WHO WORE A TRENCH COAT AND HEELS.

At Purdies farm in the summer of 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes created a *Core Group Fantasy Piece*. Its archive holds the fantasies for Michael Greenall, Anthony Howell, and Mike Owen:

FANTASY FOR MIKE OWEN

Wear only clean Y-fronts and wait in bed.
For the duration of the piece:
Keep your body absolutely stiff and straight.
Chew gum.
Smile continuously.
Say at any points: "Please be nasty to me".
"Would anybody like some tea".
Violent obscenities to Miranda.
Apologies.
When given the bag, offer its contents for appreciation.

©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Feminism See: Southend Green Women's Liberation Group, Women

Fiona Templeton See: **Templeton, Fiona**

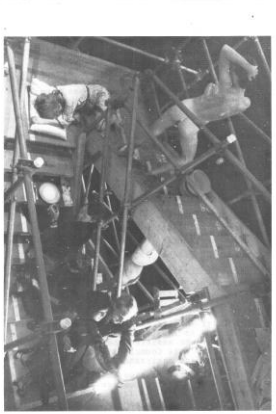
Fire

E.g. Anthony McCall *Fire Event III* held at 43 Egerton Gardens, London SW3 on 27th Nov, 1971 (Artwork in The Theatre Of Mistakes Archive)
See Reindeer Werk



Core Group Fantasy Piece, Summer 1975: Fantasy for Mike Owen

Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session (October, 1975)



THE TING:
THEATRE OF
MISTAKES

PERFORM
FIVE CONCERT PIECES AND A FREE SESSION.
At the London Exhibition
The Flower Market
Covent Garden WC2.
Saturdays 11,18,25 October 1975.
Sundays 12,19,26 October 1975.
Admission 50p.

MANIFESTATION-Anthony Howell
TIME-SPACE -Fiona Templeton
SOUNDINGS -Nik Greenall
CONDITIONS -Lindsay Moran
EQUIPMENT -Miranda Payne
BODY-AURAL -Howard Tong,Anita Urghart
A.N.Other -Mike Owen
with;
Bob Janz,Amikam Toren,Pat Murphy,
David Spathaky,Roy Cramer,Bob France,
Charlotte Crozet,Jane Clark,Carlisle Reedy,
Rob Birch,Patrick Fetherstone,Deborah Howell,
Janet Maloney,Oliver Pickles,Steven Srawley,
Annabel Nicolson
Limited seating available.
Refreshments.

Program, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Performed at the London Exhibition, the works were: *The Three Act Piece*; *Heights, Slides and Collisions*; *The Exercise Session with Domino Trigger + The Consecutive Building Piece*; *A Continuous Contact Body Progression*; and *The Table Piece*. The *Free Session* "may prove the most incalculable performance of all, but could turn out to [be] the one with the most extravagant structuring." (Program)

See also: Rehearsal

Fiver Show (3-23rd June 1976)

Held at the Art Room, the show consisted of over 20 artists, including works by Flanagan, Susan Bonvin, Hockney, and Amikam Toren. All pieces had to be priced at £5.

> framing or presentation costs were a major difficulty to be surmounted when work is priced at such a low price. Artists who used the show as a jumble sale in which to get rid of their less interesting or dated ideas sold nothing at all.

Anthony Howell, July 1976, Theatre of Mistakes Archive

With performances (Mikey Greenall; Theatre of Mistakes) and readings (Anthony Howell, Nick Totten, John Welch, Anthony Barnett) on Friday nights. See also: Letters, London Calling

Four Artists (1974)

A group show: David Coxhead, Susan Hiller, Anthony Howell, Amikam Toren.

Free Sessions See ***Five Concert Pieces***

Fuchs, Alan See Poetry, *Wallpaper*

Games

See: Julian Maynard Smith, *One Rule Game,* Fiona Templeton

"The Theatre of Mistakes is more like playing a game than acting in a play. As in a game, we employ formal rules to extend the intensity of being as we are, rather than attempting to 'be' someone else."

(Program notes, *Preparations for Displacement,* 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)

> As with any game, instructions are learnt and rules elaborated, but no particular actions are choreographed. Unlike any game, there is no method of winning. The performers may play for and against themselves and for and against each other, each may decide on methods of collaboration or methods of sabotage. Mostly, they perform for the sake of the performance.
>
> Like any great painting, Pairs' Game exists in its own terms. Teams playing cricket "play the game" for themselves, yet a good game can attract a good audience. Each watcher of a game of cricket watches in their own terms, some for the result, some for a deckchair in the sun, a pint of lager and white figures strolling across a green.

Program/press release *Pairs Game* (1975/6)

The resultant apex of the work is The Performance—where chosen exercises are performed at the same time or on the same space, sometimes chosen at random, sometimes chosen in accordance with the strictures of an over-structure (like a game) concerned with problems of time, space, number and articulation.

In such performance "games", result is *ranspo:ed for winning. Thus the performers work extremely hard to achieve an overall effect rather than striving to compete against each other.

Program *Two Journeys* (May 1976)

Greetings may be expected to become more familiar as the circles expand: as the circles contract greetings may be expected to become more formal.

The natural conclusion of this game comes about either when the performers are standing in a line-out so retracted that all five are touching each other or when the performers are standing in a line-out so extended that no one performer remains within sight or sound of any other.

Program *Active Circles* (August 1976)

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes, a performance art company, will be mounting five concert pieces and a free session at The London Exhibition for three weekends in October.

The Theatre of Mistakes is the seven person nucleus of a larger performance art movement "The Ting", which holds regular workshops where performance exercises are generated and redefined. The company is able to perform in any language, and some of its projects are rehearsed for periods as long as a year.

Rather than acting, the performers use exercises to create the possibility of extending their own behavior into the arena of the action presented to the public—thus the only drama the performers are involved in is that of their real lives at the time of the performance. The "drama" visible depends largely on the audience reading their own interpretation into every situation made manifest at the same time as they watch the performance as if it were a game watched for the very first time—having both to elucidate the rules and judge how the game may be progressing.

Program *Five Concert Pieces* (October 1975)



Two Journeys Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Cf The traditional English parlour game of Blindman's B(l)uff whose origins can be traced at least as far back as the Middle Ages, re-emerging as a French picturesque pursuit as depicted by Fragonard. Also much enjoyed by the Marquis de Sade.

Going (1977)
Performed by Anthony Howell, Fiona Templeton, Peter Stickland, Michael Greenall, Miranda Payne, Glenys Johnson in various combinations and venues including: Cambridge Poetry Festival and Theater of the New City, New York.
See also: Bibliography, Chance, Diagrams, Endings, Rehearsal

Going is the first of The Theatre of Mistakes' works to be wholly rehearsed, mistakes incorporated. Beneath bare bulbs, three men and two women (or two men and three women), constantly threaten to leave ("Really, I must go," "I do think I'd better be going now") yet never actually do. The repetition of text and gestures drawn from the rituals of saying goodbye becomes increasingly violent. Hands slam on a table, a cigarette packet is tossed, performers square up to one another, detain and push away. Phrases are non-committal, casual, petulant, full of rage. Silences are punctuated by swoons and tonal voice choruses that lend gravitas to even the tritest pop songs. *Going* is relentless: a structure with a human metronome and no ending. Our satisfaction comes from figuring out its fugal form, recognising the mistakes and the corrections they trigger, and then watching it play out over the five acts, each performer enacting all the other performers. Is there still a narrative if everyone is the same person? Is there still drama if emotions such as anger cannot be attributed to any one 'character' but are performed as part of a formal sequence? (*cf* Anthony Howell's novel *Lost Farm* which distils the events of a decade in a single day and sets out not to reveal the inner thoughts of any of its characters).
As Templeton says, when *Going* was conceived in pre-Thatcherite Britain, no-one looked like this. Slick-haired and grey-suited, its performers could have belonged to a nameless organisation somewhere on the 'wrong' side of the Berlin wall. They appear locked in a Kafkaesque struggle from which there is no escape, penned in by the audience on four sides, by a formal conceit. Little wonder that when *Going* was performed in Pittsburgh's Western Penitentiary, prisoners adored it; lifers felt it reflected the futility of repeated applications to the parole board. Post 80s, everyone looks like this, like the face of faceless corporations; of commuters caught in the 9 to 5 treadmill.

The story is that when *Going* toured to New York in '78, performer Greenall sat in the audience on his night off and fell asleep.

Johnson recalls being the first to fall in *Going* at the Pittsburgh Western Penitentiary and how vulnerable she felt lying face down on the floor surrounded by burly prisoners.
(Interview: Glenys Johnson: London, 18th Dec, 2008)

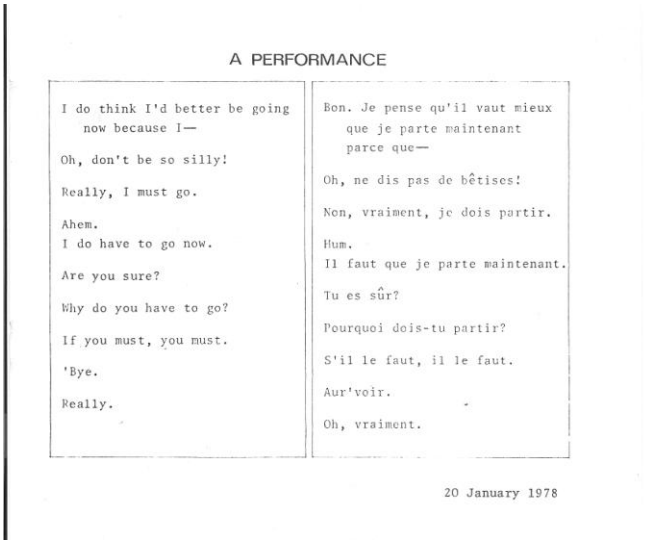


Mickey Greenall, Peter Stickland, Anthony Howell and Glenys Johnson in *Going*
Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

According to Peter Stickland, *Going* is to The Theatre of Mistakes what *Waiting for Godot* is to Beckett. It's the work in which their prolonged enquiries into mutuality cohered and also the last time this core group were united in purpose and investigation.

"Going pre-empted the disbandment of the group. A scripted performance involving attempts to leave each participant in following the rules becomes bound to the rest as they weave their identical actions into different moments of the same role."

(Jason E Bowman "Accidentally on Purpose, The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes, Towards A Retrospective" PSI15, Zagreb, June 2009)



A PERFORMANCE

I do think I'd better be going now because I—	Bon. Je pense qu'il vaut mieux que je parte maintenant parce que—
Oh, don't be so silly!	Oh, ne dis pas de bêtises!
Really, I must go.	Non, vraiment, je dois partir.
Ahem. I do have to go now.	Hum. Il faut que je parte maintenant.
Are you sure?	Tu es sûr?
Why do you have to go?	Pourquoi dois-tu partir?
If you must, you must.	S'il le faut, il le faut.
'Bye.	Aur'voir.
Really.	Oh, vraiment.

20 January 1978

Extract from Program for Paris Biennale with essential phrases from the text translated into French. The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Goldfish

See *Three Act Piece*. No animals were harmed in the making of this performance.

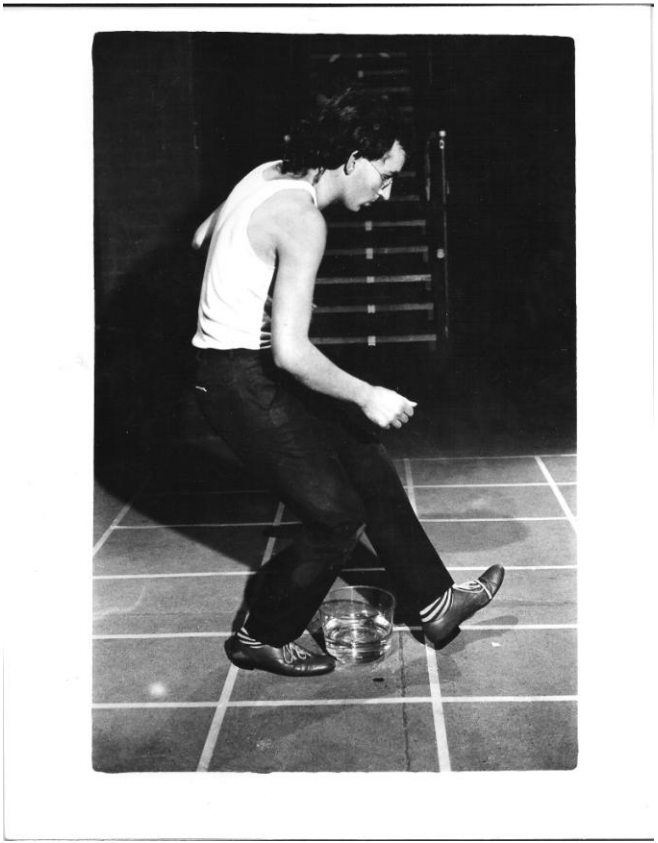
Gossip

"Gossip is only the lack of a worthy memory" (Elbert Hubard)

It would make a good novel, Anthony Howell said. The writer going between people who aren't necessarily in contact, hearing what each one has to say, relaying the memories of one to another, repeating opinion, being privy to multiple perspectives while individuals remain locked in their singular narratives of nostalgia or analysis. In short, the writer as a conduit for gossip.

History is merely gossip (Oscar Wilde)

The process of researching an entity as complex as Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes is well served by the notion of gossip as the subversive strategy of the excluded, as articulated by cultural theorist Irit Rogoff : "Gossip involves exchange not merely, not even mainly, of information, and not solely of understanding, but of point of view" (*Gossip as Testimony - a Postmodern Signature*). Professional relations within The Theatre of Mistakes were enhanced and complicated by interpersonal relationships that created ever-shifting dynamics. Some participants had remained friends; others hadn't spoken in years. There was dissent, or silences; there was time and a death and a drifting apart. Gossip engages; it creates a mystique around its subjects. It occupies the spaces left by questions. Who threw the script someone else painstakingly typed into the fire? Who was 'against agreement'? Who fell asleep while sat in the audience? What was the Secrets Piece? (See also: Unattributed)



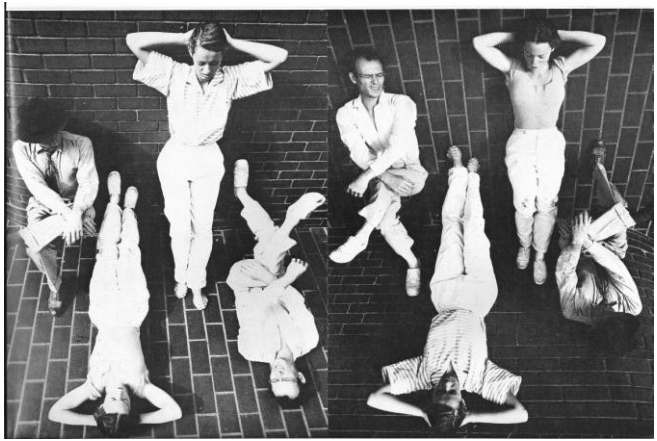
Lindsay Moran and goldfish in *Three Act Piece*, Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

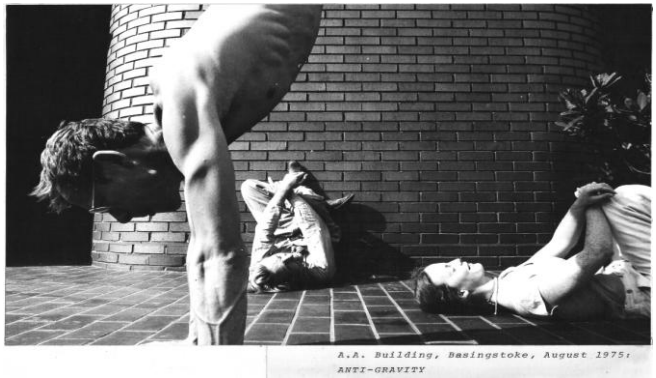
Gravity

See: *Ascent of the Stediljk*, Julian Maynard Smith, Station House Opera



Anti-Gravity Aug 1975, A-A Building, Basingstoke
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive





Greenall, Mickey (Mikey/Mik) (1948-?)



Greenall in *Preparations for Displacement* Photo: ©Nicholas Bechgaard

See also: The Art Room, *The Street, Five Concert Pieces*

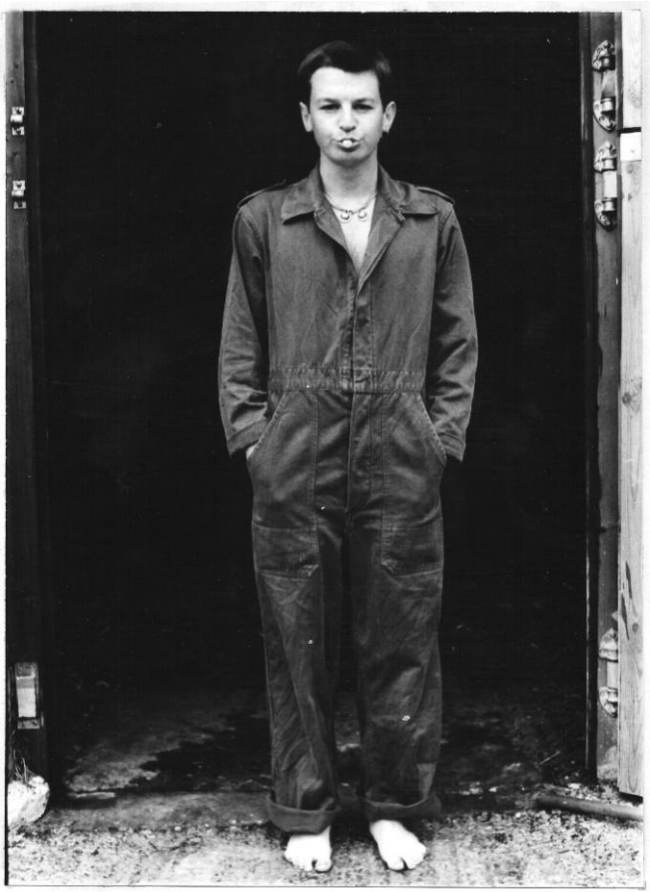
Mickey Greenall studied and lectured in Fine Art at Maidstone college and became part of the Core Group of Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes in 1975 (Signe Lie Howell remembers him as very reliable). He went on to co-create the Mutuality signature with Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton. It was his friendship with Michael Craig Martin that introduced the latter to The Theatre of Mistakes and led to their selection for *Summer Show 5.*

"Mikey was a kind of Hermes character, a free spirit. A great performer-interpreter. Soft, intuitive, impish, flying around, being naughty…"
(Conversation: Peter Stickland, London, Nov 2008)

He shared a squat with Howard Tong who recalls the house had no roof so when it rained, they were forced to occupy lower and lower floors to avoid being soaked. The garden became one big mud bath and they made helmets out of mud, all of which inspired Mickey's *Mud Man* performance.

"Mikey used to sing: *One day my prince will come; one day my rinse will run*."
(Conversation: Howard Tong, London, Oct 2008)

Whilst less interested in structure than some of the others, he brought his unique creativity to the group, particularly through his visual sensibility and his improvisation skills. Apart from Howell, he was the only performer there from the first Theatre of Mistakes work (*Preparations for Displacement* in 1975) right through to *Homage to Morandi* in 1981. He can be heard on the sound recording of *Going* (see Bibliography).



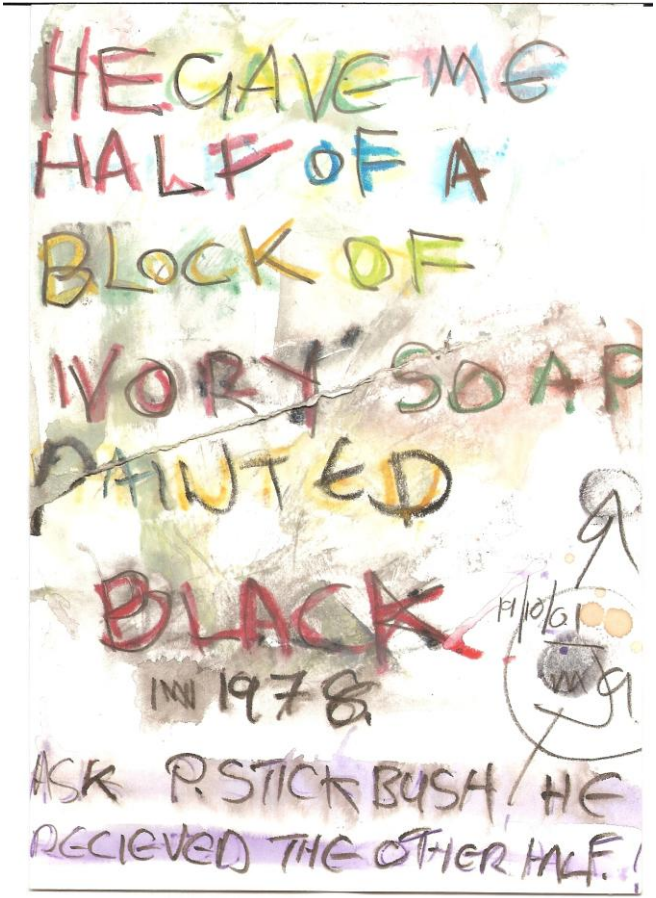
Greenall in the eponymous aviator suit. Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes, c. 1975

His own practice included illustrations for Anthony Howell's long poem, *The Mekon* (1976), diagrams and other works on paper and, latterly, ceramics.



Above and below: Greenall artwork sent to Anthony Howell in 2001 for *Performations*, work on paper, 12 x 6.1cm, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive





Greenall artwork sent to Anthony Howell in 2001 for *Performations*, work on paper, 23 x 16.2cm, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Greenall died in Manchester several years ago and so is the only member of the Core group(s) apart from Anita Urquhart to date not to have been interviewed in the research for this text. A retrospective of Greenall's work is being curated by Hadrian Piggott, Gwendolyn Leick and other friends.

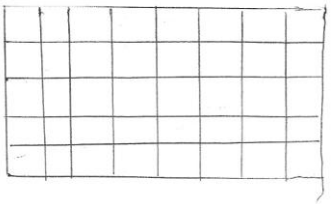
Grey Suit Editions

Publishing company established by Anthony Howell. The 'magazine' was a video compilation of performance and video art. Publishers of *Going* and *Homage to Morandi* (See Bibliography)

Grids

The Performance Space:

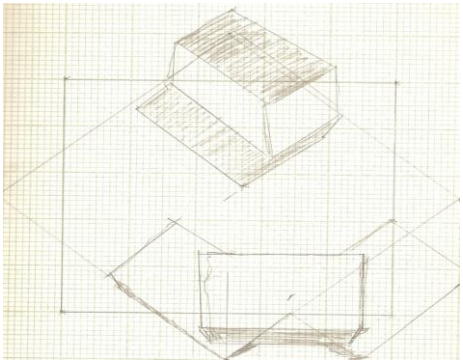
Roughly half a mass SPACE BOX marked out with tape as a grid:



The mass space box calculated by discounting the reader, the metronome and the performer bringing on the items.

The vocabulary of the grid was part of the art scene, in New York at least, from the 1960s onwards, deployed by artists such as Eva

Hesse, Ad Reinhardt, Elsworth Kelly, Agnes Martin… Is the grid the antidote to the linear narrative? (See *Quilting Bee*).



Page from Notebook of Anthony Howell, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

This *A-Z* is also a grid. It comprises 16 books. When lined up in alphabetical order like so:

A	B	C	D
E	F-G	H	I-K
L	M	N-O	P
Q-R	S	T-U	V-Z

and opened to pp25-26, they form a rectangle and a diagram emerges.

Gymnasium

See *Elements of Performance Art*, Exercises

Whilst The Theatre of Mistakes Archive holds many loose-leaf drafts and copies of exercises, as of 2009, the entire Gymnasium collection has yet to be found.

Extract from Statement for Funding Application, *nd* c1975/6
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

3) SOUNDINGS. One of the most important areas of the company's activities is that of the written instructions based on the Gymnasium of performance exercises which have been collected from contributions to the workshops. These range from pure performance exercises to mutual art projects, filling five clearly categorised volumes, and are slowly coming to be recognised for what we have hopes that they are: a comprehensive entity and a major work of concept art. This Gymnasium urgently requires publication—as this would allow a rapid dissemination of our work, art and ideas. Together with the The Performance Books (Preparations for Displacement, The Street, The London Exhibition), in which any piece we have done is as fully described and as easy to read as the text of a conventional play, this gymnasium permits others to perform our work, while our documentation plots a brief history of our development. In order to get action towards publication underway, we need to obtain duplicates of the volumes already in existence and to bring out a small specimen edition of some of our most interesting results.

Musics magazine no 9. September 1976

From 'The Gymnasium' by The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

EXERCISE EXERCISE

Invent an instruction:

A) to be carried out by one performer

or B) to be carried out by a specified number of performers

or C) to be carried out by any number of performers.

The instruction may concern:

A) the conditions of the performance

B) the body of the performer(s)

C) the aural (verbal, musical) aspects of the performance

D) the time and/or the space in which the performance occurs or any aspect of speed and/or distance

E) the equipment performers might employ.

The instruction may be a simple action or a complex action broken down into its simplest stages. The instruction may be less than an instruction: the contribution of a piece of equipment, of a floor pattern, of a word to be recited.

The exercise proposed by your instruction(s) may have time values specified when concerned with body values, conditional values when concerned with equipment, aural values when concerned with spatial values or any other combination of values.

Time may be expressed a) adverbially (do this quickly or slowly) b) in terms of the clock (do this for x minutes) c) in terms of action (do this for as long as it might take you to do that). Space may also be expressed in various ways.

Exercises may be designed to accommodate the number of people, the abilities of the people, the time, the space and the equipment available on the day of the workshop or performance.

Exercises may be

a) self contained
b) adaptable
c) evolving out of another exercise.

Exercises may require that they occur in isolation: exercises may require the simultaneous performance of another exercise.

Exercises may be headed with a memorable title and/or with a reference number. they may be typed or written clearly and presented in duplicate on copy for a file.

Exercises may be created for particular circumstances that do not require that they be filed. Exercises may be delivered aurally, and they may be forgotten as soon as performed or sooner.

EXERCISE PERFORMANCE

1) An exercise can be performed by a single performer, by two performers, by a chosen number of performers or by all performers.

2) An exercise can be performed for the duration of the performance or for a certain amount of time during the performance. It can occur once or a number of times.

3) An exercise can be performed anywhere in the performance space or in a certain part of the performance space.

4) One performer may be engaged in performing several exercises simultaneously: several performers may be engaged in performing a single exercise at the same time. One performer may execute several exercises one after another: several performers may execute a variety of exercises at the same time.

"In rhetoric, tautology requires that both substance and reference be repeated. This is desirable.

In mathematics, a tautology is defined as excluding no logical possibilities. This requires that the substance be repeated with the converse reference. This is desirable.

No matter how far one reference may take you, return to the substance to find yet another reference. Thus you will know the substance.

This model is the subject not just in the sense of the topic, but in the grammatical sense of the protagonist, although passive.

It is as if the point of focus retained and displayed any reaction to its display."

"The Art of the Axiom as the Art of the Muse"
Fiona Templeton May 1976

5) Certain exercises may be found to be particularly suited to performance in conjunction with other exercises: certain exercises may be found to be particularly suited to performance in conjuntion with no other exercise – in general, AURAL exercises are best performed while the performer remains motionless (unless that particular exercise demands motion). BODY exercises are best performed while the performer remains silent (unless that particular exercise demands sound). certain of the EQUIPMENT exercises are designed for the use of a sculptor moving and/or manipulating objects in an ordinary way and under no physical or aural constraint. many of the TIME/SPACE exercises are specifically designed to be performed in conjuntion with other exercises. and the MANIFESTATION exercises refer to an over-all consideration of the performance within which many exercises may be employed.

6) All or any aspects of the manner in which an exercise is to be performed (any of the above considerations or any other considerations) may be decided by chance before the performance, as may the decision to include or exclude any particular exercise from a performance.

7) Exercises may be invented, altered, practised, elaborated upon, simplified or abandoned. The instructions governing any exercise may be adhered to or broken. Exercises may be exchanged during the performance or certain aspects of particular exercises may be exchanged during the performance. Exercises may be reversed, repeated or reflected by performers.

8) Progression to a point where an exercise is to begin is in itself an exercise in progressing to the point where that exercise is to begin. Action subsequent to the conclusion of any exercise is in itself an exercise in action subsequent to that exercise.

9) An exercise is not performed in preparation for anything other than the finest execution of itself, and is not chosen to be performed in preparation for anything other than the finest organisation of its inclusion within that performance.

10) The content of a performance is the conjuntion of the exercises included in that performance with the performers engaged in the performance of those exercises.

11) The meaning of an exercise rests in its execution. The reason for performing an exercise is simply in case there is a reason.

10

Musics magazine September 1976

EXERCISE ALTERATION EXERCISE

Alter one or more aspects of any of the instructions for any exercise.

e.g.

An accumulative aspect might become a diminishing aspect and vice versa.

Time and/or number limits might be decreased or increased.

Specified physical actions might be substituted for other actions.

Triggers might be altered or create a contrary effect (a freeze might become a jump).

The over all condition might be changed – height might be limited, or space or number of performers.

Dual reactions might be created within the same exercise, either for one or for more than one performer.

The sequence of a set of actions might be reversed or altered.

Direction or method of orientation or change of direction might be altered (an exercise that requires right angle turns could change into an exercise that required 45 degree turns, an exercise performed in a circle might be performed along a straight line).

A group exercise might become an exercise for a single performer and vice versa.

Whenever possible the medium might be changed – a verbal exercise being adapted into a physical exercise and so on.

"Performance requires time, space, impulse and agent.

An agent does change in time and space.

And since the art is of the situation, the purity of the medium is not affected by its reality.

The performance is the creation of a particular fact out of mental and physical facts through concentration – perhaps simply in juxtaposition and focus in space, or simply in longevity.

Until you have performed an action, then repeated it for an hour, then backwards, then slowly, then with one leg caught in a table fallen towards you, you do not really know what that action is.

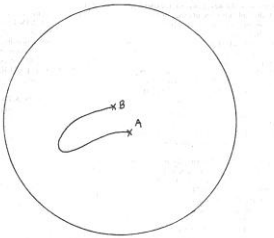
No matter how far one reference may take you, return to the substance to find yet another reference. Thus you will know the substance.

Subject is the invisible product of substance and reference."

"The Art of the Axiom as the Art of the Muse"
F.T. May 1976

CIRCLE where movement becomes slower towards the centre

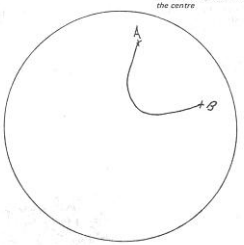
Quickest path between two points an arc curving towards the circumference



slowest path through the centre

CIRCLE where movement becomes slower towards the circumference

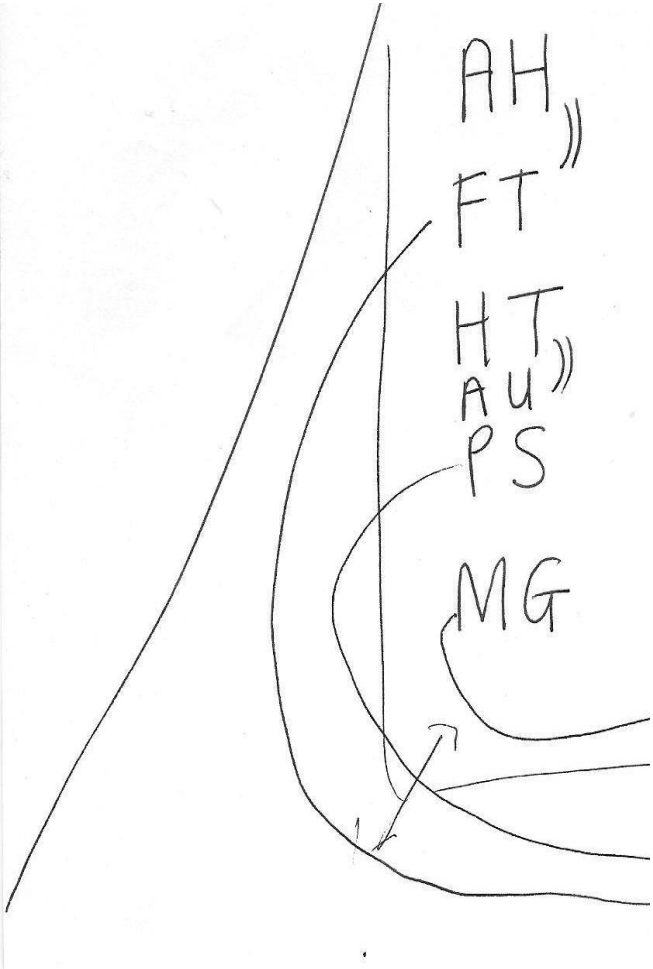
Quickest path between two points an arc curving towards the centre



slowest path along or towards circumference

11

Musics magazine September 1976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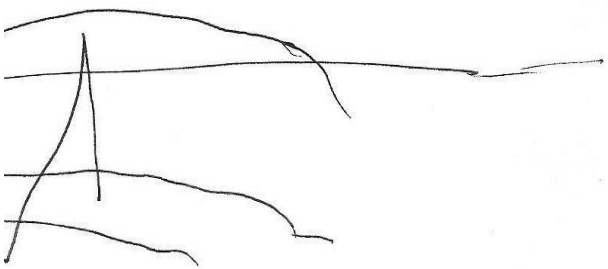

2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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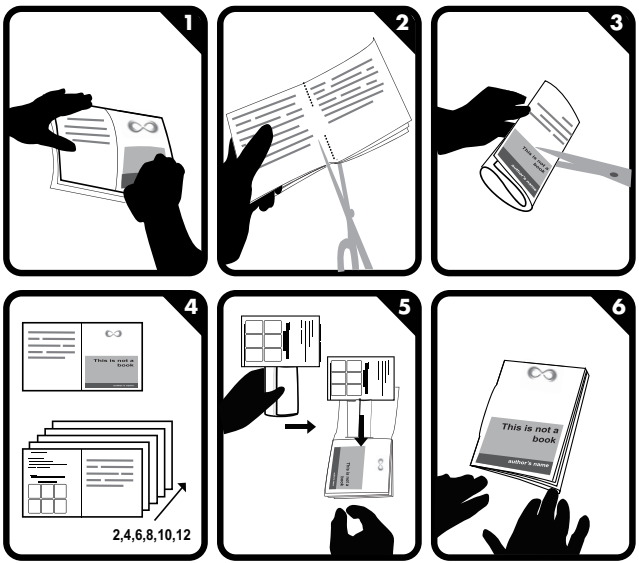


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – H

Marie-Anne Mancio

Hartley Wintney, Hazeley Heath, Hampshire

Hayward Annual

Head Turns

Heights, Slides and Collisions

Hiller, Susan

Hockney, David

Homage to Morandi

Homage to Pietro Longhi

Hour Book

Hornsey

Horses

Howard Tong

Howell, Anthony

Howell, Deborah

Howell, Signe

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

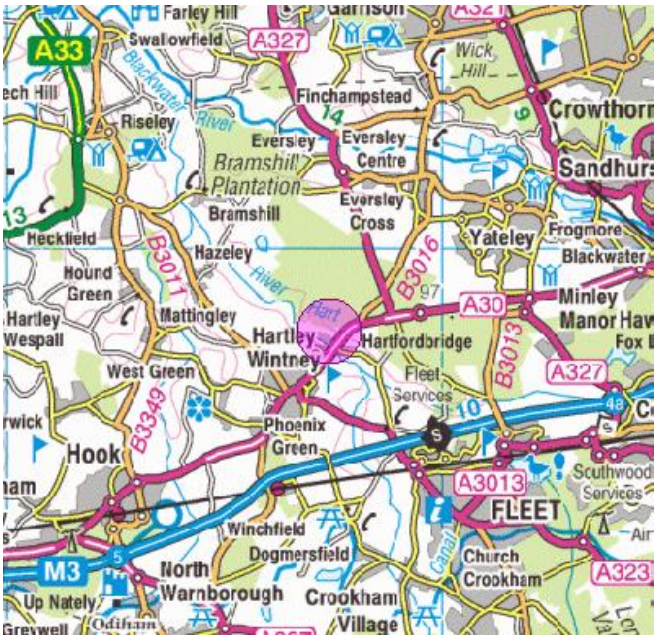
an A-Z

H

Marie-Anne Mancio

Hartley Wintney, Hazeley Heath, Hampshire
Location of Deborah Howell's farm, Purdies and site of several performances including *Heights, Slides and Collisions*, *Active Circles*, and *Waterfall*.

For a history of the village and surrounding attractions, see http://www.hartleywintney.org.uk/



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See also: Englishness

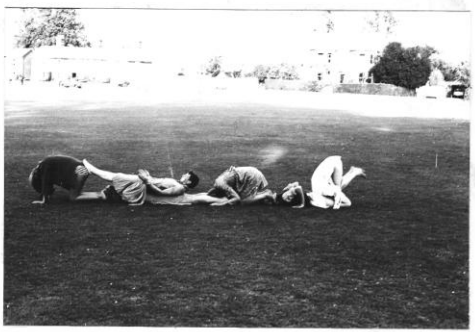

The Cricketers Pub, Hartley Wintney ©Trevor Saunders

"I remember it being rather hostile… from the locals…."
(Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov, 2008)


Village Green, Hartley Wintney:
HEIGHT SLIDE AND COLLISIONS
Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



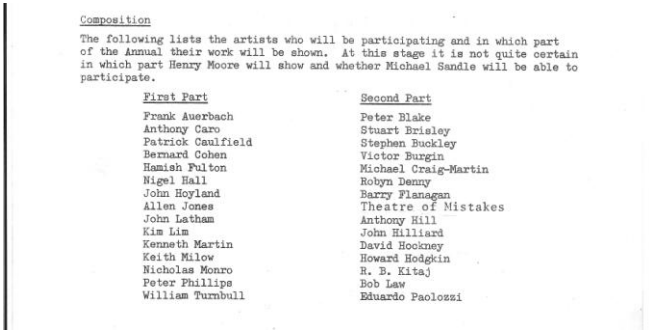
Village Green, Hartley Wintney:
AUTOMOTIVE REGENERATION with RANDOM COSTUME RESTRICTION
(duo crossing trio, solo)



Village Green, Hartley Wintney:
AUTOMOTIVE REGENERATION with RANDOM COSTUME RESTRICTION
(endgame situation)

Photos ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Hayward Annual (1977)
The Theatre of Mistakes were the performance element, occupying the Sculpture Court with *Waterfall.* (See Audiences, Critics)



Composition

The following lists the artists who will be participating and in which part of the Annual their work will be shown. At this stage it is not quite certain in which part Henry Moore will show and whether Michael Sandle will be able to participate.

First Part	Second Part
Frank Auerbach	Peter Blake
Anthony Caro	Stuart Brisley
Patrick Caulfield	Stephen Buckley
Bernard Cohen	Victor Burgin
Hamish Fulton	Michael Craig-Martin
Nigel Hall	Robyn Denny
John Hoyland	Barry Flanagan
Allen Jones	Theatre of Mistakes
John Latham	Anthony Hill
Kim Lim	John Hilliard
Kenneth Martin	David Hockney
Keith Milow	Howard Hodgkin
Nicholas Monro	R. B. Kitaj
Peter Phillips	Bob Law
William Turnbull	Eduardo Paolozzi

Letter from the Hayward to exhibitors, January 1977, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Draft for Flyer, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



A Waterfall at Hayward Annual, 1977
Photo: ©Giles Thomas

Head Turns (Ascham Street, 1975-6)



Howell, Stickland, Templeton, Greenall perform *Head Turns*

Photos ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

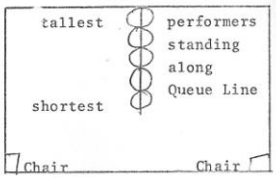


Heights, Slides and Collisions (Hartley Wintney, August 1975)

HEIGHT SLIDES WITH COLLISIONS

A performance square (with sides calculated by employing HEEL TOE MEASURING) is marked out with a further line drawn from the mid-point of one of the sides into the centre—this is the Queue Line.

Two seats are placed in the corners of this square opposite the side from which the Queue Line has been drawn.



To start:
Performers stand heel to toe (but with feet together) along the Queue Line: they stand facing the centre in order of height in a Height Slide from the shortest performer at the centre to the tallest performer at the junction with the side.

One at a time, performers begin working in the square, starting with the shortest performer. When one performer starts by abandoning the centre the next in the queue moves up a space to occupy the centre. Performers always move along this line (and any of the lines which compose the performance space) one foot at a time, heel to toe along the line at each step, hands and arms by sides, heads down, chins against chests.

This entry takes the form of one performer slightly pushing the one ahead. Thus the tallest performer in the first Height Slide, having no one to push him or her off centre, remains frozen until another performer comes along the Queue Line behind (as will be explained later in the game).

Instructions for Performance ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

See also: Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session, London Exhibition,

Hiller, Susan (1940-)

Artist, friend to Signe Lie Howell; see www.susanhiller.org

"I wasn't a participant although I did take part informally in a couple of Ting events, and Ting members also took part in large-scale events of mine around the same time. Wallpaper magazine was ongoing during the same period, and David Coxhead and I were closely involved with it; Anthony Howell had the tendency to blur the boundaries between the magazine and Ting, so there was often a productive as well as annoying confusion of memberships in his mind.... It would be historically inaccurate to say that either David or I were ever a member of Ting; we didn't attend their meetings or take part except sporadically in events. You need to bear in mind that the early 1970's were a fruitful period for event-based works and there were numerous collaborations of all kinds, usually temporary and brief."

(Susan Hiller, email to M Mancio, 21st October 2008)

See also: Art Room, Horses, Women

Hockney, David See **Moran, Lindsay**

Homage to Morandi (1979)

See also: Bibliography, Critics, Michael Greenall, Mistakes, Ray Smith (Photographers)

Theatre of Mistakes Program for Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre, March 1981:

HOMAGE TO MORANDI: This play treats the proscenium arch as the frame of a picture. The performers begin by arranging furniture in "still lives" inspired by the metaphysical painter Giorgio Morandi and his arrangements of jugs and small objects. The stage is divided into two rooms, and the performance into two parts—first "Metaphysical Furniture", then "The Ghost of a Reason". Items of furniture are not used as "props" but as partners in the work—the manipulated and the manipulators becoming interchangeable. Performers arrange and are arranged in turn. They seem part of the set, step out of it, alter it and then step back in again. The wardrobes, suitcases and chairs take on passionate characteristics while the performers become furniture and background. MORANDI is a work of oppositions, animate with inanimate, the figurative with the abstract, life with art.

SUSAN HILLER's Dream Mapping. Art investigation and participation project for seven dreamers. All dreams are recorded for one month before participants meet to sleep and dream at incubation site (in this case, circles of Marasmius oreades, "fairy rings", in a field adjacent to Purdies Farm) for three nights. Incubated dreams of these three nights are first mapped individually (that is, floor plans, topographic maps, diagrams, cosmic maps, etc. are drawn), and the individual maps are then superimposed to discover and delineate a map of the shared group experience, the incubated dream space/time. In this way an infra-pattern, a pre-recalled "co-incidence" is expressed in precise visual language.

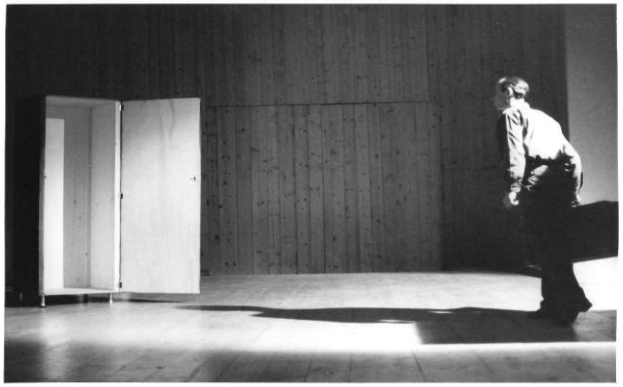
D.C.



David Coxhead's review of Purdies August 1974 weekend,
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Anthony Howell, Julian Maynard Smith and Peter Stickland in *Homage to Morandi* (1980) Photo: ©Bob Dantzig





Suitcase:

(Pulling down the suitcase with his right hand at the same time as he gives the Chair a swipe with his left hand, knocking the Chair against the Wardrobe)

Do you think so?

(The Suitcase opens the suitcase and places it back on the Wardrobe's shoulders, askew and open, so that its lid transgresses the hypothetical "wall"—the suitcase is mainly supported by the Wardrobe's right hand, together with his right elbow—his right hand remaining behind his head.)

Suitcase:

How about a mood of excitement?

(He then takes up disrupted suitcase position, falling straight forwards into it as usual—Illustration 7.)

Wardrobe:

(Stretching out his left hand—to signify his open door)

Will no one take this weight off my shoulders?

Suitcase:

Done over!

Chair:

(Getting up, he takes up a new chair position in room 1—that of chair 3 in Plan 4—and then he falls forward onto his head, still retaining his kneeling chair position, despite having fallen through 90 degrees. This means that his feet are in the air)

I could have been Chippendale.

Act 4, scene 4:

Chair:

(Gets up, goes through the gap, and places himself in Chair position in room 2, behind the Wardrobe and with his back to the audience, in corner A)

Vacant.

Page from script *Homage to Morandi*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Homage to Pietro Longhi (1976)

See also: Audiences, Overdue, *Serpentine Summer Show*

SCENES AT A TABLE

Homage to Pietro Longhi

Allowing a number of possibilities to occur within a specific structure while ensuring that accident reads as intention, Scenes at a Table alters with every performance, since the actions of the first performer to enter ostensibly dictate the actions of the performers entering afterwards.

When The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes comes together to mount a production of Scenes at a Table sufficient rehearsal time must be allowed for each of the five performers in the piece to have the chance to be the instigator of the action, coming to terms with the repercussions of what he or she may do, and learning what accidents are likely to occur when the other performers attempt to repeat these initial actions. Thus Scenes at a Table could be considered as if it were five pieces in one, or as if it were as many pieces as there are performances; each a consequence of the present—for no lines or steps are learnt prior to any performance. The company may mount a single performance in five acts, or mount five single act performances. And since each act is timed by a performer working along the edges of the space (The Metronome) an act can be set to last a few minutes or a few hours—depending upon the speed of this metronomic performer.

But throughout the piece there is a conflict between freedom and adherence to rules. For the first performer in any act exists only as a memory for subsequent performers: intent on repeating the earlier actions of that initial performer, they attempt to ignore the instigator's present existence, only observing him or her in order to repeat that performer's actions later. Should any recognise that instigator's existence in the present, because of some breakdown in their observation or repetition of the actions set up, they are in turn ignored by all the other performers. But now, having broken the rules

Statement ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

anyway, the performer who has thus recognised the instigator is also free to perform any sort of action, and this may also have to be strictly repeated by a subsequent performer.

While a fugue-like construction governs the outline of the piece, Scenes at a Table has its particular modifications and oddities which aid, abet and in some instances even contradict the structure. Repetition is made more difficult by being performed on tiptoe, and swoons result as a consequence of standing on tiptoe for extended periods; instigator becomes metronome in the final scenes of each act, each act presents the performance from a different angle, while songs accumulate towards the end of each act and so on. Peculiarities such as these, and all the strategies available and accidents likely to occur, are impossible to enumerate without the text of the performance instructions.

Scenes at a Table is dedicated to the painter Pietro Longhi (1702-1785), whose many variations on a single theme or a single posture, reappearing in dozens of his works, have been a source of inspiration to the company during the year. A number of the ideas exercised by the performers have been derived either from Longhi's use of similar angles in figure drawing or from his employment of eye glances as a geometry by which to establish the focal centre of a picture. Originally, several of Longhi's paintings were inspired by scenes at tables in the performances of 18th century Venice.

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes first started working on Scenes at a Table in summer 1975. A version of one act of the piece was presented at the University of East Anglia in June this year. The performances at the Serpentine Gallery mark the first time that each performer in the piece has been afforded the opportunity to instigate an act.

Summer 1976

Statement ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



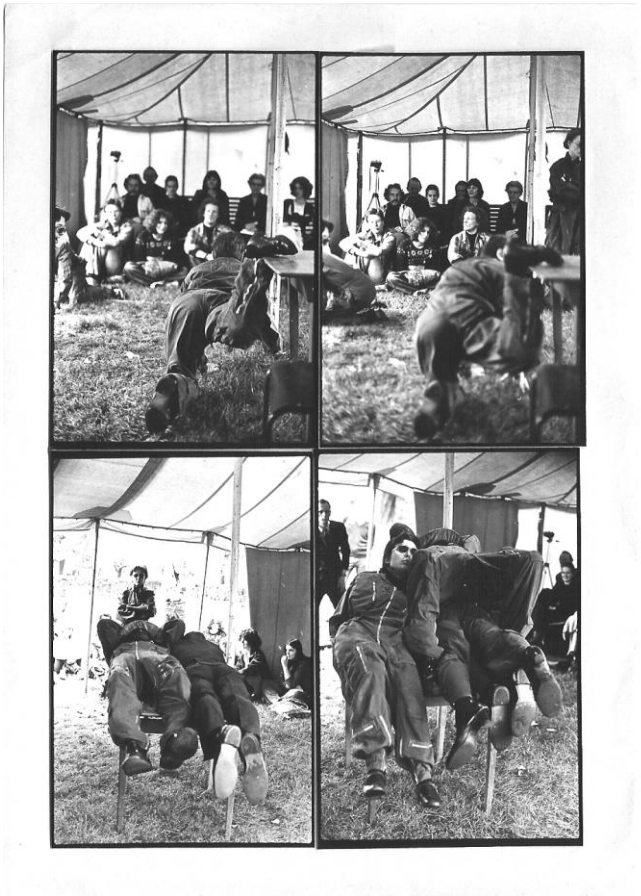
HOMAGE TO PIETRO LONGHI

PERFORMANCES
SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS 3p.m. – 6p.m.
25 SEPTEMBER TO 17 OCTOBER

Detail of 'The Fortune-Teller at Venice' by Pietro Longhi reproduced by courtesy of The National Gallery, London.

Arts Council, Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, W2

Mastercopy of Invite Card, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Scenes at a Table: Homage to Pietro Longhi at the Serpentine
Photos: ©Caroline Wilkinson

Hour Book
See also: Choice by Chance, Fiver Show



Extract from the *Hour Book* ©Anthony Howell

The *Hour Book* remains unpublished despite George Mattingly of Something Else Press saying, "THE HOUR BOOK is incredibly entertaining. I like the idea very much" (Letter to AH, 5th December, 1973). The poet Bill Shepherd (latterly a collaborator with Anthony Howell on *Statius: Silvae, a selection*, Anvil Press, 2007) allegedly paid for his with a washing machine.

Hornsey See **Art Schools**

Horses
See Purdies. Susan Hiller had a nasty fall from one, Howard Tong recalls Anthony Howell riding pregnant ones, and Howell has since created a work in St Petersburg for some (See: http://www.anthonyhowell.org/perf9.htm)

Howard Tong See **Tong, Howard**

Howell, Anthony (b.1945)
See also: *Bibliography, Birth Ballet Chorale, Five Concert Pieces, Going, Homage to Morandi, Homage to Pietro Longhi, Preparations for Displacement, The Street*

Poet and former Royal Ballet dancer Anthony Howell is always the protagonist of narratives of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes. Described as: Brilliant; disciplined (see notation of *The Waterfall*); dictatorial; a generous mentor; a man who wrote impassioned letters (see *Rape of the Mind*); spatially aware; obsessive (see *Orpheus and Hermes*), a tireless documenter, depending on whose narrative you choose.
He was inspired by his partners: his wife Signe Lie Howell introduced him to the myth of Ting; he co-wrote *Elements of Performance Art* with Fiona Templeton, created the role of the girl in *Orpheus and Hermes* for Miranda Payne, borrowed Gwendolyn Leick as the model for Monica in his novel *Lost Farm…*
A prolific writer, he has issued many critically acclaimed editions of poetry (*Oslo*, *Dancers in Daylight*), critical essays on artists, and *The Analysis of Performance Art: A Guide to its Theory and Practice,* Routledge, 1999. Other works include: *The Company of Others* (a novel based on the dance world. The original manuscript allowed the reader to choose where to read next), and *Oblivion*.
Following the dispersal of The Theatre of Mistakes, he took solo works such as *The Table Move* to Australia. After a stint in Argentina, Howell is currently engaged in the controversial act of choreographing and dancing tango to classical music.
(See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzPKv8ZtdbQ)

THE TABLE MOVE (Etudes for Objects): This is a series of studies in functional choreography, based on day to day actions rather than on some vocabulary of esoteric steps. Here are no "arabesques" or "contractions" but a sequence of ordinary actions which have become so familiar they generate their own "enchainements". The piece is a sort of instrument which allows many melodies; a spiralling cubism of actions seen from all sides—a sort of galaxy of known orbits. These spheres of functional movement revolve around each other, and in so doing generate a poetry drawn from the complexities to be found in our most familiar expressions of thanks and apology—expressions as usual as the actions themselves.

Theatre of Mistakes Program for Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre, March 1981



Anthony Howell c.1973/4 Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Andrew Eden and Anthony McCall have both alluded to Howell's teaching and mentoring abilities as part of the legacy of The Theatre of Mistakes.
(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008; Interview: Anthony McCall, Jason E Bowman, London, 26th Sept 2008)

MY FANTASY

Choose to perform none or one of the following:

1) An already existing physical exercise or an already existing verbal exercise from any of the books for the length of my fantasy.

2) Continuous freeze for the length of my fantasy.

3) Begin with ordinary actions at an ordinary pace slowing down to absolute stillness by the end of my fantasy.

4) Have a free session (accepting trigger necessities) for the length of my fantasy.

5) Perform any thing you have done in any previous performance for the length of my fantasy--but perform whatever it is backwards.

6) Crawl around energetically for the length of my fantasy, pausing only to turn round and smile.

7) Repeat as exactly as possible my own actions during the length of the group's fantasy about me (accepting trigger necessities) for the length of my fantasy.

DO NOT DISCUSS YOUR CHOICE WITH ANYONE ELSE.

Whether you choose to perform any of these possibilities or not, I would like all performers to obey the following trigger necessities:

A) All performers should remain within the green losenge between stables and barn for the length of my fantasy.

B) If you trip over a wire or touch or are touched by a wire at any time during my fantasy, Jerk your whole body once then remain moving for the rest of the performance—while never allowing your back to lose contact with the floor.

C) If touched by me at any time during my fantasy remain in a continuous freeze for rest of the performance employing only DYNAMIC TENSION for the face or DYNAMIC TENSION without actually moving any part of the body. Only break this freeze if forced to obey trigger B (above).

Group Fantasy Piece: Anthony Howell, nd, c.1975
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Howell, Deborah

See also: Audiences, Purdies,

Formidable; first female veterinary student in the UK; performed in early Ting works at the London Film-Makers Co-Op and at Michael McKinnon's studio dressed in full hunting gear…..



Howard Tong and Deborah Howell in *Preparations for Displacement* (1975)
Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008:

SB: There was a performance with candles and they were floating across the pool and Deborah, Anthony's mother, decided that she would dive in. No-one really knew why. She did a great big belly flop and all the water came out
AE: And all the candles went out

"She was really supportive; she was in the front seat of every performance."
(Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov, 2008)

Howell, Signe Lie



Signe Howell and Anthony Howell at the Dairy? nd
Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Andrew Eden:
"The roots of The Ting are Anthony and Signe"
(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008)

Norwegian Signe Lie met Anthony Howell in late 1968, marrying him in 1972. She spent an extended vacation with him Dec. 73-Jan 74 in the U.S. where he was writer-in-residence in Iowa. During this time they saw Robert Wilson perform *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin* (see robertwilson.com for images) at the Brooklyn Academy of Music Opera House and discussed the kind of work they wanted to create. Even prior to this, Signe collaborated with Howell in early performances and poetry readings (see *Essora Tessorio*) and introduced him to her artistic circle and to the concept of the Ting. She also recruited participants, inspired *Birth Ballet* Chorale in 1974, and instigated *Quilting Bee*. She recalls the fluidity of those days when there was a culture of people dropping in on one another at Ascham Street and at the Dairy. Fergus Early and his then girlfriend Jacky Lansley were around; also Michael Nyman, John Sharkey, Mike McKinnon, Andrew Eden and Susan Bonvin. She also recalls drawing endless diagrams mapping people's movements.
(Conversations: Signe Howell, Oslo, 13-14 October, 2008)

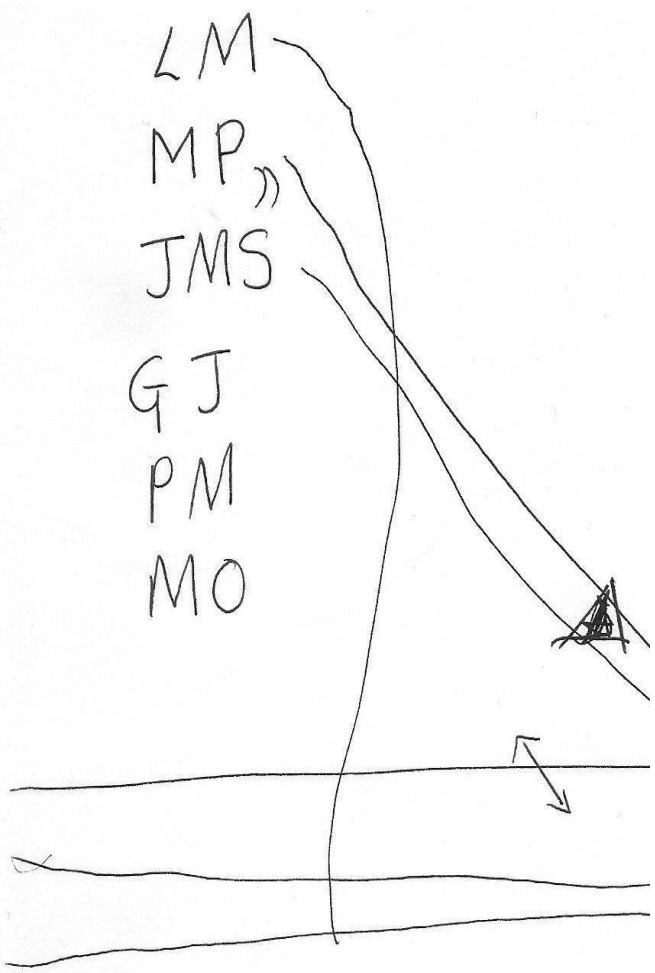
Peter Stickland:
"Signe influenced [The Ting] in a great, mythic, almost spiritual way, a kind of coming together."

Vicki Chick:
"She was incredibly smart and she had this beautiful voice."

Susan Hiller:
"Signe should be contacted. It seemed there was no knowledge of her contribution nor any accurate history of early Ting"

Signe Howell is now Professor of Anthropology at Oslo University and author of several books including *The Ethnographies of Moralities* and *The Kinning of Foreigners.*

See also: Unwritten, Women
Read: Anthony Howell's *Oslo* Calder and Boyars, 1975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2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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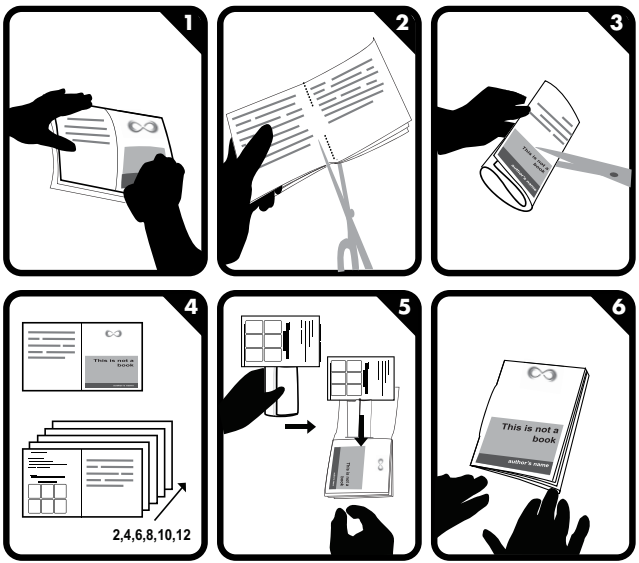


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – I, J & K

Marie-Anne Mancio

Inconsistencies

Indebted

Influences

Instructions

Interdisciplinarity

Introduction

Itinerary

Janz, Robert

Jason E. Bowman

Johnson, Glenys

Key

Kids

Kisses

Koans

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

I-K

Marie-Anne Mancio

Inconsistencies

As evidenced by both the Soundings and the memories of participants, there are inconsistencies in the naming of the 'collective' and its participants. For instance, Victoria Chick is both a Vicki and a Vicky; Michael Greenall is a Mik and a Mikey. Documentation of *Preparations for Displacement* (1975) refers to "The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes"; Fiona Templeton claims it was always "*The* Theatre of Mistakes"; Peter Stickland did not recall the name "Ting" being used after 1976 and yet there it is in the catalogue for the 1977 Paris Biennale. By 1978, they are calling themselves The Theatre of Mistakes, *Art* Company. It is possible that these inconsistencies arose in part from the fact that different individuals took on responsibility at different times for writing press releases and so forth (see Roles). Perhaps there was an element of politicking here too, Ting being associated more with Signe Lie Howell and the looser group prior to the core. This *A-Z* prefers to mimic, rather than resolve, inconsistencies. Therefore although my preferred name is The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes (it sounds more fluent and the incorporation of both elements reflects the shifting organism it is), various versions are used throughout.

See also: *Two Freedoms*

Indebted

Jason E Bowman and I are indebted to all the participants of Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes (and related artists) for their generosity throughout our ongoing research process. Their insights and continued willingness to contribute to the debate have proved invaluable.

Influences

Several members of The Theatre of Mistakes cite poet John Ashbery, writer Gertrude Stein, and performance director Robert Wilson as influences. Others include:

"Punk; avant-garde French new wave fiction; systemic music and composers such as Robert Ashley, Philip Glass[1], Terry Riley and Steve Reich; the theories of Fluxus poet Henry Flynt and concurrent works by other performance artists including Stuart Sherman[2], Steven Cripps[3]; or the legacies of instruction based works by Sol LeWitt and those distributed in London by Yoko Ono[4];early incarnations of expanded cinema by early manifestations of the London Film Makers Co-op; and the art criticism of writers such as the late Barbara Reise[5], Stuart Morgan, Gregory Battock, Jeff Nuttall and RoseLee Goldberg."

(Jason E. Bowman "Accidentally on Purpose: The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes, Towards A Retrospective" Unpublished paper by Jason E Bowman and Marie-Anne Mancio, PSI 15 Conference, Zagreb, June 2009)

Andrew Eden noted:

---

[1] Philip Glass and Robert Janz were members of the artist collective Continuum which pre-empted Art and Language.

[2] The American performance artist Stuart Sherman, companion of Carson McCullers was a practitioner of monologues and minimalist performances. He died in 2001.

[3] Trained as a fireman Stephen Cripps became British pyrotechnic sculptor. He died in 1982, aged 29.

[4] Although Ono's book of instructions *Grapefruit* was published in 1963 in tandem with her first exhibition in the UK at the Indica Gallery in London.

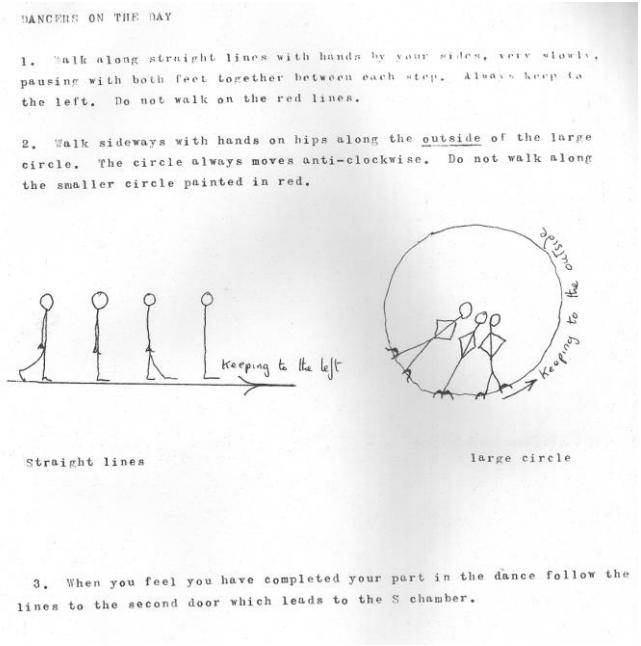
[5] American critic Reise moved to London in 1966. She favoured minimal and conceptual art in her writings. She took her own life in 1978. Her estate was recently purchased by Tate Britain.

"One of the things Anthony talked about right from the beginning was the figures in the parks – people throwing kids over their heads, that sort of thing – being a key influence."
Marie-Anne Mancio:
"That kind of physicality… the interest in gravity?"
Eden:
"Yes"
(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008).

Instructions see Conceptualism, Exercises, Fantasy, Kisses

"The initial workshops [at the Dairy] of our group, The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes, were based on the idea that we were making art by creating instruction recipes and we were all the servants and masters of each other. In other words, anyone could suggest an exercise and we would all adhere to its rules as rigidly as we possibly could, on the understanding that the person who set that exercise would also be our servant or somebody else's servant in the event of another exercise being set."
(Anthony Howell in Nick Kaye *Art Into Theatre*, Harwood Academic, Amsterdam, 1996, 130)

As well as instructions for performers, Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes often provided detailed instructions for their audiences. In the early days, this facilitated participation. For instance, the program for *Preparations for Displacement* explains how the viewer may insert themselves into the action. Later, program notes seemed to be instructions to viewers on how to read the works.


DANCERS ON THE DAY

1. Walk along straight lines with hands by your sides, very slowly, pausing with both feet together between each step. Always keep to the left. Do not walk on the red lines.

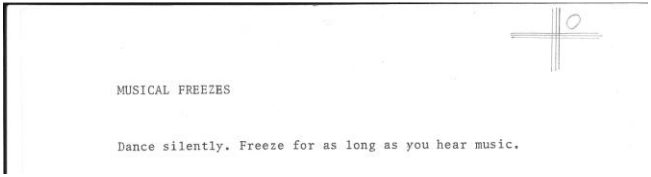
2. Walk sideways with hands on hips along the outside of the large circle. The circle always moves anti-clockwise. Do not walk along the smaller circle painted in red.

Straight lines large circle

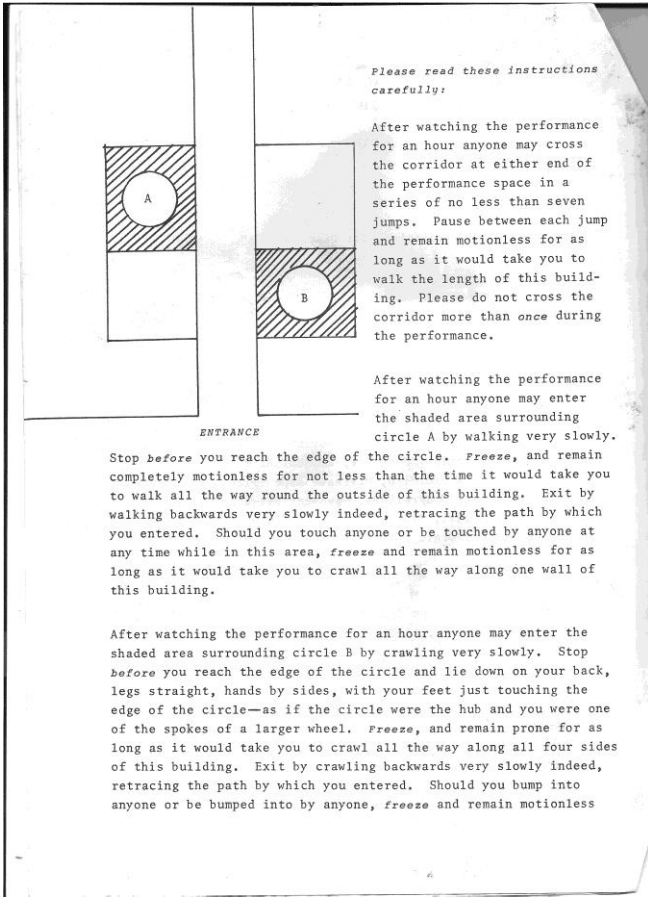
3. When you feel you have completed your part in the dance follow the lines to the second door which leads to the S chamber.

Excerpt Program for *Birth Ballet Chorale* (1974)
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Exercise from *The Street* book, ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive


MUSICAL FREEZES

Dance silently. Freeze for as long as you hear music.



Reverse side of Program for *Preparations for Displacement* Corn Exchange, Cambridge Poetry Festival ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Interdisciplinarity

Anthony Howell's concern with interdisciplinarity is evident as early as 1971 in a document for the Association of Creative Arts, instigated by himself and film maker Mike McKinnon. Their proposal for a workshop project suggests weekly meetings to exchange ideas and "break down the barriers existing between the arts, which at present deny an artist the opportunity to comment on work outside his or her own field."

The ethos of events at Purdies farm and the creation of *Wallpaper* were also instrumental in this. Interdisciplinary practice enables one to be both inside and outside. It disputes the need for either/or, preferring 'and' and both.

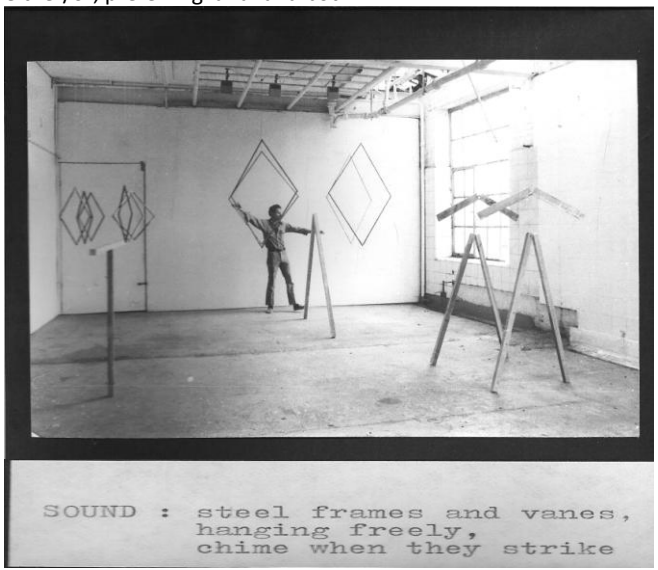


Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive, nd, c.1974

Introduction

Curator, Jason E Bowman:

"Writer and dancer Anthony Howell[6], founder of *Wallpaper*[7] magazine initially instigated Ting in London in 1974 contributing to the milieu of collective practice and artist-led operatives occurring post 1968. Active in the UK's recession of the 1970's against the impending background of Punk, Thatcher, D.I.Y culture and a proliferation of cultish behaviours The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes was inspired by chance and the possibilities of interdisciplinary collaboration. Populated by writers, poets, dancers, economists, film makers, visual artists[8] and architects its processes were informed by the individuals whose interaction and participation created its dynamic and then its works. Practising by 1977 under the shortened moniker The Theatre of Mistakes, they disbanded in 1981.

[….] In 1975 The Ting became The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes through devising multiple performances from a series of rules and games-based exercises (known as *The Gymnasium* and recorded in eponymous notebooks[9]) explored and refined by advertised open sessions and interdisciplinary happenings. Decisions were made either unanimously or through chance including by the roll of dice and resulted in concepts such as the co-created *Manifesto for Mutual Art*[10]. David Coxhead, Michael Craig-Martin, Susan Hiller, Robert Janz, Anthony McCall, Michael Nyman, Julian Maynard-Smith, Pat Murphy, John Welch and Amikam Toren were associated with its initiatives.

Its core members Michael Greenall, Anthony Howell, Howard Tong, Lindsay Moran, Glenys Johnson, Miranda Payne, Peter Stickland and Fiona Templeton continued to develop its extraordinary internal logics and structuralist bias throughout its ten year history. Each project came to contain an internalised mistake which would corrupt pure concept and yet be coddled in the crucible of its structure.

Public exposure came via the diverse distribution systems of the time such as the experimental Artslab spaces, the eclectic Cambridge Poetry Festival, the Serpentine Summer Open exhibitions, The Hayward Annual, the Paris Biennale and tours of the United States including penitentiaries in tandem with artist-led spaces such as The Dairy; shared by The Ting and London Filmmakers' Co-op and home to the studio of sculptor Robert Janz. In parallel to public performances obscured, interdisciplinary processes developed intermittently over ten years at an isolated farm informed early versions of works such as Hiller's *Dream* Theatre of Mistakes core members including *A Waterfall, Going, The Street, Performance for the Blind, Rape of the Mind, Secret*

[6] Howell left the Royal Ballet in 1966 to pursue his poetry and interest in interdisciplinary work.

[7] Wallpaper was founded by Howell in 1974 and ceased publication in 1977. It issued 7 editions.

[8] The training of certain artists engaged with The Ting also reveals an extraordinary potential to consider experimentation in particular British arts schools such as Hornsey and Falmouth.

[9] Book/s of notated exercises and experiments 1974-1976. *The Gymnasium* has not been found in the cataloguing undertaken to date. It potentially no longer exists although it is believed that the majority of the exercises it recorded remain documented in other forms.

[10] *Manifesto of Mutual Art*, 1975 Unpublished, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

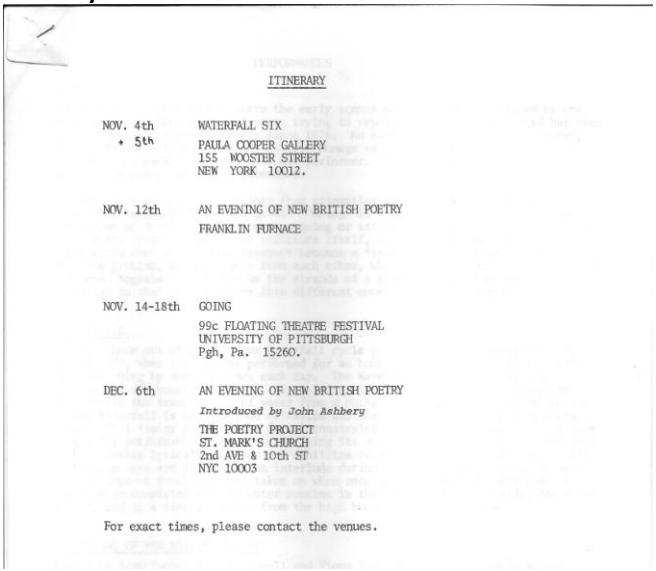
Maps[11], McCall's *Fire Pieces*[12], Toren's *Performance for Cars* and research for performances later to be realised by The Ting: *Performance, Ascending [Ascent of] the Stedelijk, Ballet for Pregnant Women Chorale* etc. The work of The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes defies the orthodoxy of body art within the art history of performance art, allowing for a unique reconsideration of how performance art practice relates to the overlooked history of contributions from the legacy of Minimalism through Conceptual Art and towards Punk."
(Jason E Bowman "Accidentally on Purpose, The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes, Towards A Retrospective" PSI15, Zagreb, June 2009)

Writer/Researcher, Marie-Anne Mancio:
I begin writing a biography of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes which goes something like this: *Anthony Howell instigated Ting inspired by his interest in chance and seeing Robert Wilson in New York; his interrogation of systemic art; and conversations with his then wife, Norwegian anthropologist, Signe Lie who introduced him to the Norse Ting myth. Pat Murphy recalls Robert Janz inviting her "to a kind of inaugural meeting of the group Anthony Howell was organizing." She thinks this was in July 1974*. Instead of that story, I feel compelled to add other equally plausible narratives: *Anthony Howell and Signe Lie co-created The Ting*; or, *Howard Tong was responsible for the visual development of The Ting*; or, *Fiona Templeton was instrumental in the shift from The Ting (a more fluid group of behaviours) to The Theatre of Mistakes, a dedicated core group of performers;* or *Fiona Templeton co-founded The Theatre of Mistakes…*
Introductions are suspect. Is it not paradoxical to position yourself outside of the thing you are writing about if you have spent so long immersing yourself in it? My own introduction was perverse: an uncatalogued collection, an archive of performance documents in which the live performance itself was represented by the photographic still, the post-event review, the instruction. There was no live element at all aside from the conversations to be had with former performers. The Theatre of Mistakes had disbanded, there were no performances to see. Yet, I soon came to realise that these conversations, these hundreds of pieces of paper, these photographs, these diagrams, these texts were perhaps the best introduction I could have hoped for because they required a specific form of reading, a formal reading. So Jason E Bowman and I sat on a flight (London-New York) with the script of *Going* and manipulated a series of objects from the in-flight food tray (a sachet of pepper for A; a plastic fork for the metronome) until we had the measure of the work's structure. Listening to the sound recording enabled us to appreciate its rhythms without the distraction of the visual. It almost doesn't matter that I have never seen *Going* in its entirety.
I did not have one introduction to The Theatre of Mistakes. I had - have - endless introductions. Each conversation with a participant, each interview, poses a new perspective. An introduction is always inevitably a work-in-progress (and so preferable to a conclusion….) Take a workshop with Fiona Templeton, read her poetry, see The Relationship's *Going (with Coming)*; track down a copy of *Elements of Performance Art;* order the script of *Homage to Morandi;* read Anthony Howell and Peter Stickland's novels; read this *A-Z*, don't read this *A-Z*, just look at the images… throw a pair of dice.
See also: Empirical, Gossip

[11] Hiller tested and made diagrams and drawings for her first *Dream Maps* at Purdies Farm, 1974

[12] McCall's first *Fire Work* was for the wedding of Anthony and Signe Lie at Sinfield Road, Reading, 1971

Itinerary



ITINERARY

NOV. 4th + 5th — WATERFALL SIX
PAULA COOPER GALLERY
155 WOOSTER STREET
NEW YORK 10012.

NOV. 12th — AN EVENING OF NEW BRITISH POETRY
FRANKLIN FURNACE

NOV. 14-18th — GOING
99c FLOATING THEATRE FESTIVAL
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Pgh, Pa. 15260.

DEC. 6th — AN EVENING OF NEW BRITISH POETRY
Introduced by John Ashbery
THE POETRY PROJECT
ST. MARK'S CHURCH
2nd AVE & 10th ST
NYC 10003

For exact times, please contact the venues.

The Theatre of Mistakes itinerary 1978, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

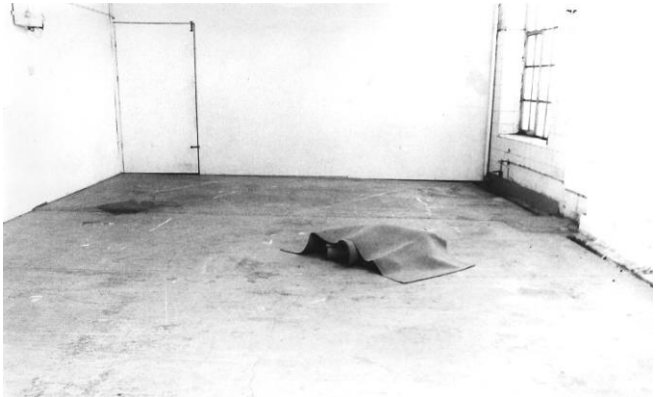
Janz, Robert (1932-)
See also: *Birth Ballet Chorale*, Jane Clark, Dairy, Ephemeral, *Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session,* Purdies

Belfast-born artist, formerly married to Pat Murphy. His *Six Sticks* formed part of *Preparations for Displacement* which The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes performed at the Corn Exchange, Cambridge Poetry Festival in 1975. "Sculptor 1" was required to arrange these sticks in the space at the beginning of the performance. If a performer knocked a stick over, they had to freeze for about half a minute then move in slow motion to pick up the stick. On touching it, they could move at normal pace again, placing it upright within 10ft of where it fell. Rugs and chairs were also substituted for sticks. He was also involved in *The Street*, and a contributor to *Wallpaper's Summer Pieces*. It is also thanks to Janz's photography, that there are records of Ting's early performances in his studio:



The Ting c.1974, Photo: ©Robert Janz?/The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Janz currently lives in NYC with his partner photographer Jennifer Kotter and is represented by Cheryl Palavin gallery (see www.cherylpelavin.com/artists/RJ-B.html).







Janz sculptures taken circa 1974. Photos: ©Robert Janz?/The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

ROBERT JANZ

curves for changing spaces

FEBRUARY 10 — MARCH 6 1976

Hester Van Royen Gallery
152a Walton St., London SW3
Tel.: 01-589 0726

Monday–Friday 10-6, Saturday 10-4

This work originates in a love for the nomadic, the flexible and adaptive, the shape-changing : form that changes form. In sculpture, it is work that develops through a cycle of changes, expands, transforms, contracts, interacts with and comments on existing sites, but once withdrawn from a site or situation, leaves no trace or scar. The simpler and more basic the point of departure and of return, the freer and wider in range are the changes that can be explored. And one travels far by travelling light. There is also an integrity and clarity, I believe, about works whose self-erasure is part of their structure.

Staves is a set of 12 staves from old barrels found at London Docks. The forms composed by arranging and rearranging the set are theme and variations on my original decisions. During the course of the exhibition the Staves will be rearranged once a week, exploring forms basic to this set of elements. Beyond this, clearly further shapes can be developed by those who become familiar with the set. Always, however, the sculpture is ready to stack away, return to the position of origin, the set, Staves.

Drawings in the street are either the outline of a barrelhoop, or (in complex sites) the outline of the shadow that the hoop casts. This method of drawing insures that the origin of each circle is always the same. The differences between one circle and another are the result of adaptation to each different site.

The drawing in parts is an arc of a circle drawn on six sheets of paper. Any way that the parts are hung on the wall or walls stretches the space by referring back to the original arc.

Janz.

Janz born 25.12.32 Belfast

Rinehart sculpture fellowship Baltimore '63
Fulbright Scholarship to Spain '64
Equipo 8 Madrid '65
Actuell Bern '65
Continuum co-founded with Estrada Madrid '65
Continuum London co-founded with Leonelli and McKinnon '67
Axiom London '68
Continuum Arts Council Touring Exhibition '69 and '70
Continuum Hayward London '70
Kinetics International Hayward London '70
Constructivist Tendencies, George Rickey Collection Touring Exhibition '70 and '71
Palenque and Pellicer Mexico '72 films for NY State U Pabon project
Studio shows and performances with Ting Theatre of Mistakes and with Jennings London '73—'75
Artists Market London '73
Changes ceremony, Memo from Turner Toronto '74
Clock Tower NY '74
Six clocks in the streets Institute for Art and Urban Resources NY '75
Continuum with Estrada Galeria Cadaques Spain '75
Hester Van Royen London '76

planned:
112 Greene St. Workshop March '76 NY
Line on a Walk in the streets Institute for Art and Urban Resources NY March '76

Jason E Bowman see **Bowman, Jason E**
Johnson, Glenys (1952-)



Going

Painter who performed with The Theatre of Mistakes, notably in *Going*. An accomplished photographer, Johnson also took photographs of the group in rehearsal at Purdies, distinctive for their use of innovative angles.

See also: Bibliography, *Two Journeys*



Above: The Theatre of Mistakes in rehearsal (Mike Greenall, Fiona Templeton) nd, c. 1976. Photo: ©Glenys Johnson

Below: Johnson in her studio, courtesy of the James Hyam Gallery

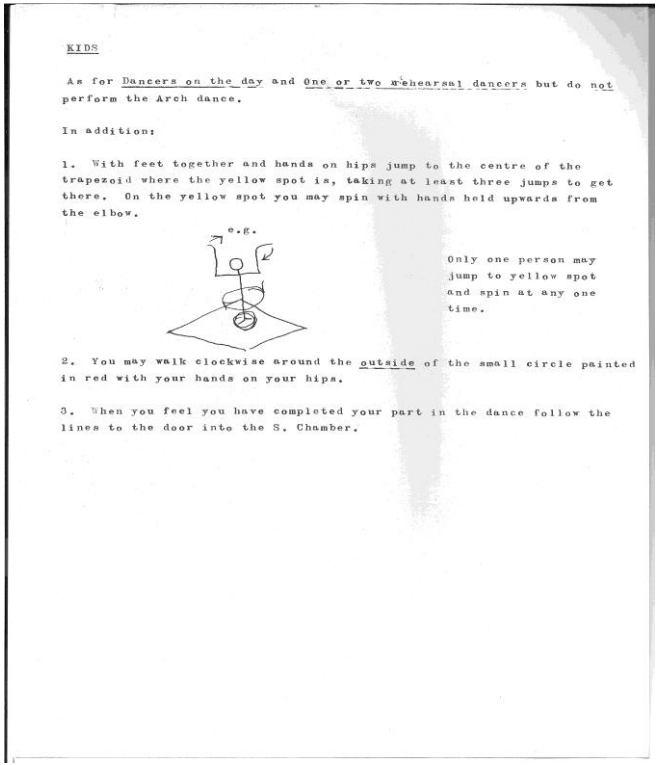


Key Text typed in this colour refers to cross-referenced entries. E.g *Homage to Pietro Longhi*: the reader can go to e-book **H**, *Homage* for more information and/or to e-book **L**, Longhi for different or perhaps the same information. Other abbreviations include **nd** for no date/ undated document. The key to the Diagram on pp25-6 of this *A-Z* is as follows:

AE Andrew Eden
AF Alan Fuchs
AH Anthony Howell
AMc Anthony McCall
AN Annabel Nicholson
AT Amikam Toren
AU Anita Urquhart
DC David Coxhead
DS David Spathaky
FT Fiona Templeton
GJ Glenys Johnson
HT Howard Tong
JMS Julian Maynard Smith
LM Lindsay Moran
MC Marc Chaimowicz
MO Mike Owen
MP Miranda Payne
PM Pat Murphy
PS Peter Stickland
RB Richard Bernas
RQ Richard Quarrell
RJ Robert Janz
SB Susan Bonvin
SLH Signe Lie Howell
SH Susan Hiller

Where names are joined by two lines), this indicates a relationship between them.

Kids



KIDS

As for Dancers on the day and One or two rehearsal dancers but do not perform the Arch dance.

In addition:

1. With feet together and hands on hips jump to the centre of the trapezoid where the yellow spot is, taking at least three jumps to get there. On the yellow spot you may spin with hands held upwards from the elbow.

e.g.

Only one person may jump to yellow spot and spin at any one time.

2. You may walk clockwise around the outside of the small circle painted in red with your hands on your hips.

3. When you feel you have completed your part in the dance follow the lines to the door into the S. Chamber.

Extract from *Birth Ballet Chorale* (1974), The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

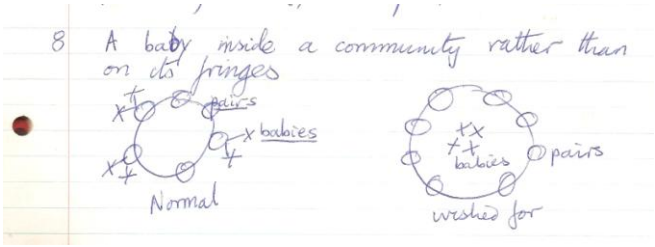
Children were welcomed as performers in the early work of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes, in *The Street* (1975) for instance.



SLOW MOTION CHILDREN in DOUBLE BODY COSTUME in front of camouflaged archway.

Documentation of *The Street* ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

It is also clear from the notebooks of Anthony Howell (nd c. 1974-5) that at least one of the performers in The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes considered their role as part of their 'personal necessities':



(Presumably though this is not a real child….



Early Ting workshop, nd, c.1974. Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)

Kisses

A) An Absolute kiss (on the mouth) signifies Primary Scene A,

B) A kiss on the Brow signifies Primary Scene B,

C) A kiss on the Cheek signifies Primary Scene C

Instructions for performers in the script of *Going* (see Bibliography)

Kisses exchanged outside of performances are not being disclosed.



Peter Stickland; Anthony Howell kisses Fiona Templeton; Mickey Greenall in *Going*. Photo:© The Theatre of Mistakes

Koans

See also: Poetry, *Waterfall*, Ritual

"Koans may be understood as psycholinguistic riddles, capable of generating a certain type of experience or as a literary genre with a complex history, embodying centuries of religious and philosophic discourse."

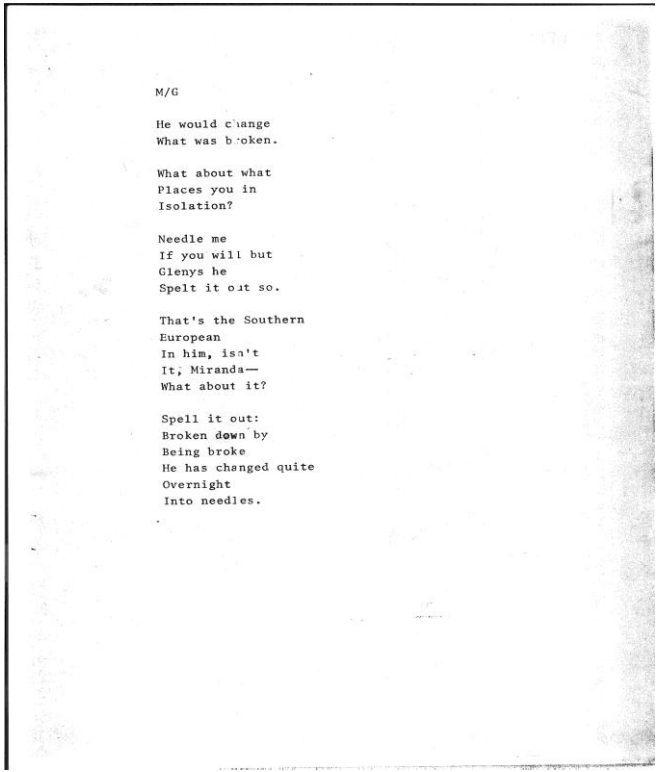
(Barry Stephenson 'The Koan as Ritual Performance' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* June 2005, Vol. 73, No. 2, 275-496)

In the Zen tradition, the posing of seemingly meaningless questions which may be used in a meditative state or to encourage deeper thinking. There are no sole answers.

E.g. from *The Gateless Gate*:

- Does the dog have Buddha-nature or not?
- No
- Does the dog have Buddha-nature or not?
- Yes

For an introduction to koans:
www.thezensite.com/MainPages/koan_studies.html
Further reading: *Sitting with Koans* by John Daido Loori, see Bibliography)



M/G

He would change
What was broken.

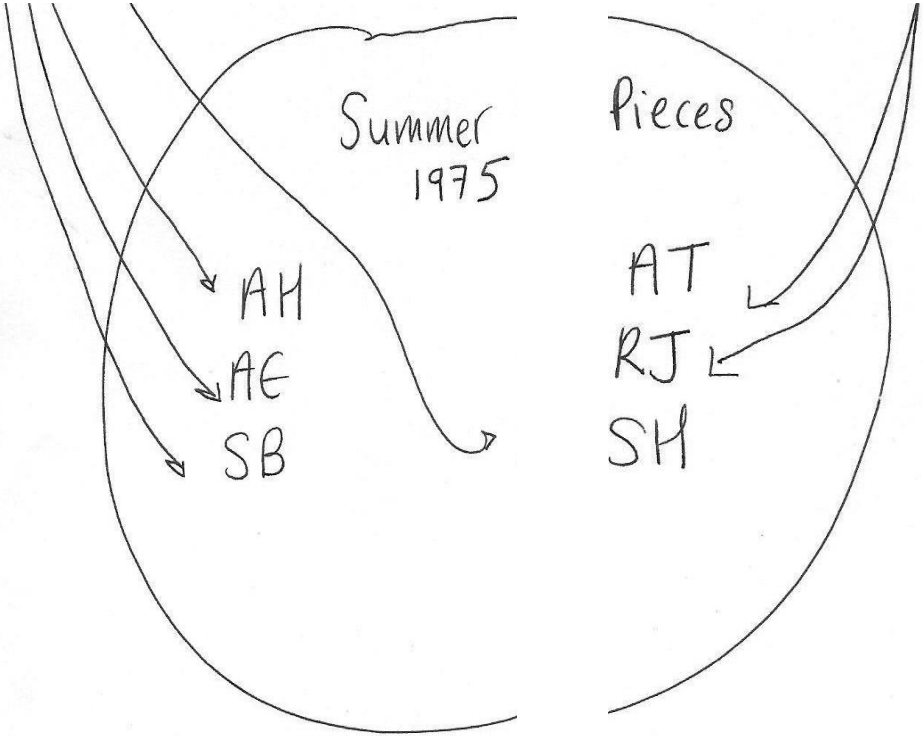
What about what
Places you in
Isolation?

Needle me
If you will but
Glenys he
Spelt it out so.

That's the Southern
European
In him, isn't
It, Miranda—
What about it?

Spell it out:
Broken down by
Being broke
He has changed quite
Overnight
Into needles.

Extracts from *Waterfall* (1977) making use of koans
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive


Summer
1975
AH
AE
SB
Pieces
AT
RJ
SH

2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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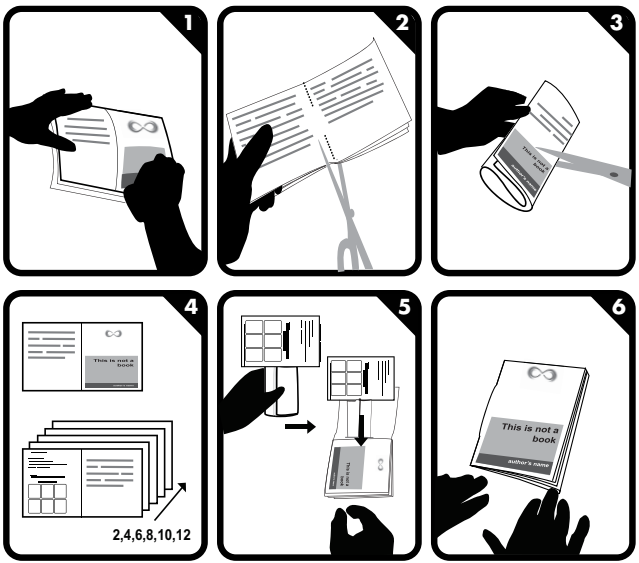
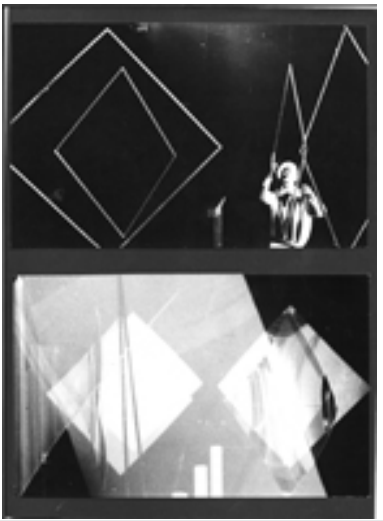


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – L

Marie-Anne Mancio

Lansley, Jacky

Lecture Performance

Legacy

Leick, Gwendolyn

Letters
Line

London Calling

London Exhibition

London Film Makers Co-op

Longhi, Pietro

Lost Farm

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

L

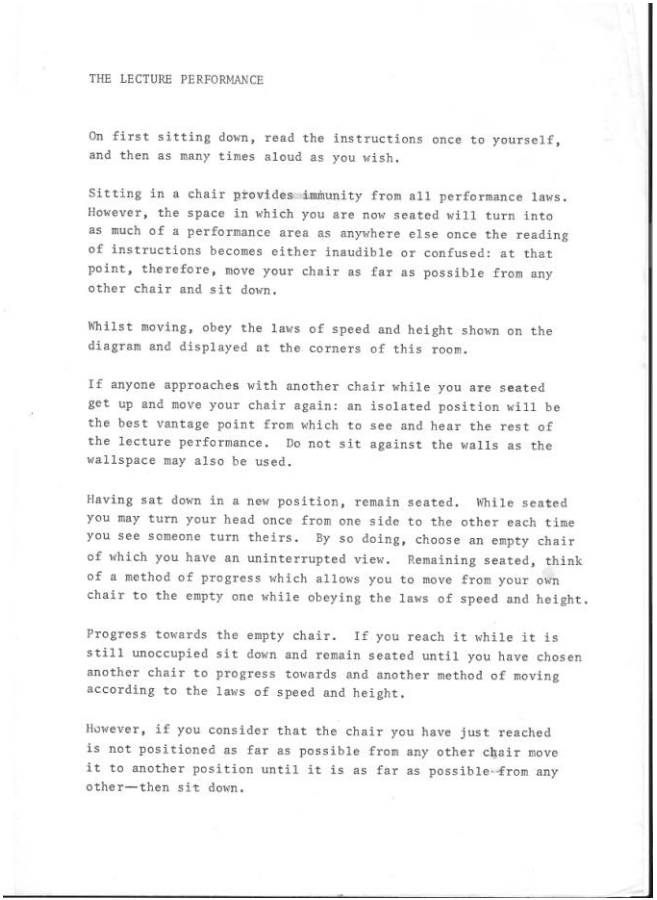
Marie-Anne Mancio

Lansley, Jacky See: **Dance**
Gave a lecture-demonstration at the Art Room.

Lecture Performance
First performed Sunday 23rd November 1975 at the Roundhouse, Camden by: Charlotte Crozet, Mikey Greenall, Anthony Howell, Marita Ludlum, Julian Maynard Smith, Lindsay Moran, Miranda Payne, Elan Reichel, Fiona Templeton

Legacy
The exercises from the Gymnasium, used in Ting/The Theatre of Mistakes workshops and then collated by Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton in *Elements of Performance Art*, were the basis of instruction by live art practitioners in the devising of performances throughout the 1980s in institutions such as Dartington and Manchester Metropolitan University. Howell's former post as Senior Lecturer in Time Based Studies at University of Wales, Cardiff Institute and Templeton and Stickland's current academic roles at Brunel University and Chelsea School of Art respectively saw their influence extend into the 1990s. That the legacy of The Theatre of Mistakes has not been sufficiently analysed is due to several factors:

i) The theorising of British Performance/live art as a discipline was still in its infancy in the mid-90s, so was not present to anything like the same extent in the 70s and 80s. At the time of writing *Maps for Wayward Performers*: feminist readings of contemporary live art practice in Britain, (Marie-Anne Mancio, unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Sussex, 1996), for example, the majority of literature had a strong American bias and prospective publishers were concerned that British work was not as marketable.



THE LECTURE PERFORMANCE

On first sitting down, read the instructions once to yourself, and then as many times aloud as you wish.

Sitting in a chair provides immunity from all performance laws. However, the space in which you are now seated will turn into as much of a performance area as anywhere else once the reading of instructions becomes either inaudible or confused: at that point, therefore, move your chair as far as possible from any other chair and sit down.

Whilst moving, obey the laws of speed and height shown on the diagram and displayed at the corners of this room.

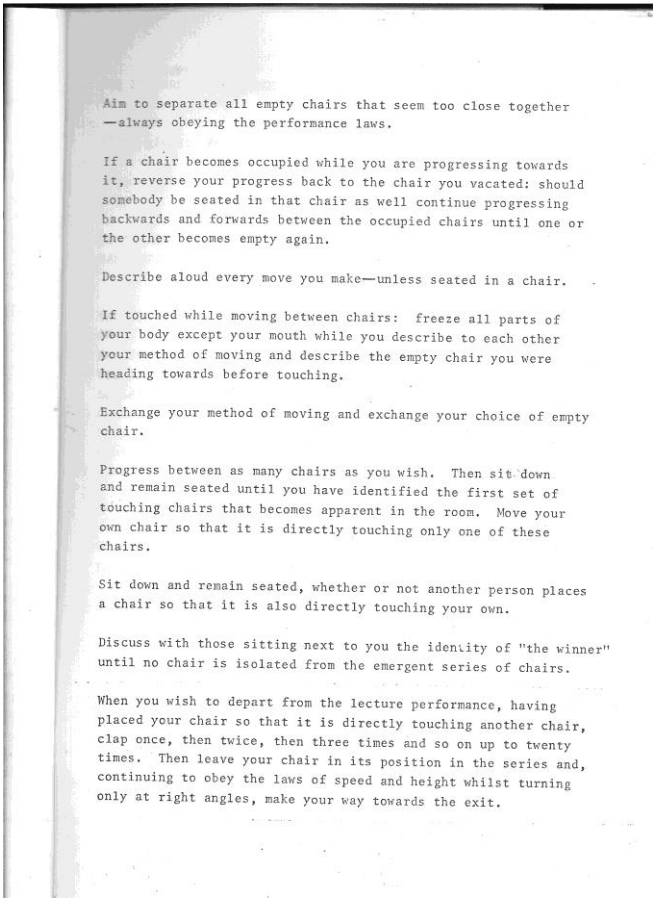
If anyone approaches with another chair while you are seated get up and move your chair again: an isolated position will be the best vantage point from which to see and hear the rest of the lecture performance. Do not sit against the walls as the wallspace may also be used.

Having sat down in a new position, remain seated. While seated you may turn your head once from one side to the other each time you see someone turn theirs. By so doing, choose an empty chair of which you have an uninterrupted view. Remaining seated, think of a method of progress which allows you to move from your own chair to the empty one while obeying the laws of speed and height.

Progress towards the empty chair. If you reach it while it is still unoccupied sit down and remain seated until you have chosen another chair to progress towards and another method of moving according to the laws of speed and height.

However, if you consider that the chair you have just reached is not positioned as far as possible from any other chair move it to another position until it is as far as possible from any other—then sit down.

Notes on *Lecture Performance*
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Aim to separate all empty chairs that seem too close together —always obeying the performance laws.

If a chair becomes occupied while you are progressing towards it, reverse your progress back to the chair you vacated: should somebody be seated in that chair as well continue progressing backwards and forwards between the occupied chairs until one or the other becomes empty again.

Describe aloud every move you make—unless seated in a chair.

If touched while moving between chairs: freeze all parts of your body except your mouth while you describe to each other your method of moving and describe the empty chair you were heading towards before touching.

Exchange your method of moving and exchange your choice of empty chair.

Progress between as many chairs as you wish. Then sit down and remain seated until you have identified the first set of touching chairs that becomes apparent in the room. Move your own chair so that it is directly touching only one of these chairs.

Sit down and remain seated, whether or not another person places a chair so that it is also directly touching your own.

Discuss with those sitting next to you the identity of "the winner" until no chair is isolated from the emergent series of chairs.

When you wish to depart from the lecture performance, having placed your chair so that it is directly touching another chair, clap once, then twice, then three times and so on up to twenty times. Then leave your chair in its position in the series and, continuing to obey the laws of speed and height whilst turning only at right angles, make your way towards the exit.

Notes on *Lecture Performance*
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

ii) *Performance*, *Live Art*, and the short-lived *Hybrid* magazines – in which UK performances were reviewed and discussed – were established in 1979, 1993, and 2002 respectively by which time The Theatre of Mistakes had performed most or their works or disbanded.

iii) Anthony Howell established *Greysuit* (1993-5), a video magazine with an interdisciplinary bias. However, apart from *Going* (which Howell was reluctant to show because he felt it did not do the work justice) and later versions of *Waterfall,* The Theatre of Mistakes' work pre-dates the eponymous use of video as a medium of documentation.

iv) The Theatre of Mistakes Archive is not currently available to the public and has only recently been catalogued which may have deterred researchers.

Despite the mass of other documentation (including an excellent sound recording of *Going* – see Bibliography), held by The Theatre of Mistakes, it was the next generations of performance collectives – Station House Opera, Forced Entertainment – who have been able to take advantage of video; the internet; the growth in performance criticism and performance making as academic disciplines; the platforms pioneered by the National Review of Live Art, New Moves, and the Live Art Development Agency to write themselves into the history books.

Involvement with Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes influenced practitioners:
Pat Murphy says: "I would say that the Ting was very important to how my work evolved. I still use some of the early Ting exercises when working with students, or rehearsing with actors. These exercises – and indeed the performances were characterized by a

real sense of presence /awareness. You would really develop a feeling for where everyone was. Also, I remember Anthony being kind and inspiring about the fragmented writing/Rituals of Memory work I was doing in the early 70s."
(Response to Questionnaire, December 2008)

Fiona Templeton's practice displays an ongoing interest in audiences and participation.

Andrew Eden's *Shared View* (1985) and his later collaborations with Susan Bonvin were developments of explorations carried out at Purdies and in *Summer Pieces.*

Peter Stickland has continued his investigations into narrative and structures.

Julian Maynard Smith claims working with The Theatre of Mistakes showed him an oppositional way of working.

Anthony Howell is also investigating participation, through tango.

Leick, Gwendolyn
Former partner of Anthony Howell who was resident at Purdies farm around the time of *Orpheus and Hermes* and The Theatre of Mistakes' European tour. A Doctor of Philosophy, an anthropologist, and currently part of the research staff in the art history faculty at Chelsea School of Art, Leick is also a photographer and author of:
(ed.) *The Babylonian World*, Routledge, 2007.

See also: *Lost Farm*

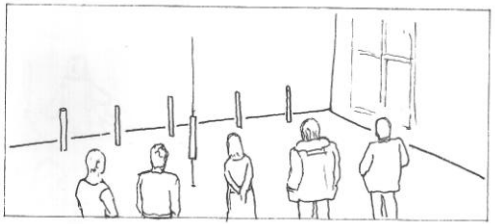
Apart from its greater complexity there is another point which makes viewing as part of an organised group different from viewing casually with a few friends and that is the shared view now lasts a definite length of time, instead of tending to appear as a series of glimpses.



4. George's pole leaps over Jack's.



5. Jane and John swing their poles round the other side of the room to pass George, Sally and Jack's poles.



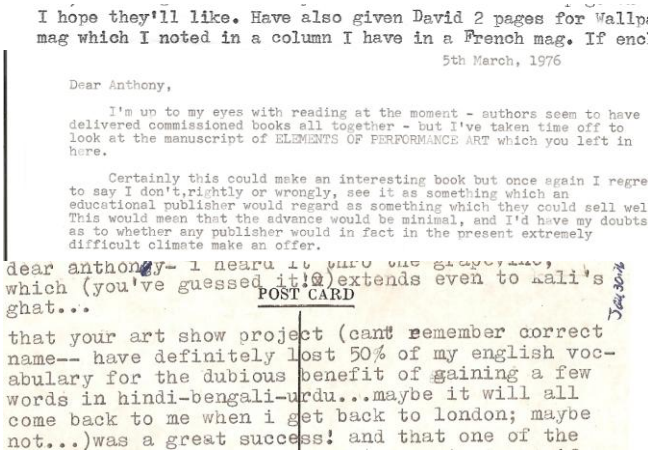
6. Each encounter involved a different pair of persons and so the problem of passing was solved differently. The plan was constant but the action was varied.

Andrew Eden *Shared View* (1985) exhib. catalogue

Letters

Cf The painter Barnett Newman who loved to write vitriolic letters. However Newman never sent his.

The Theatre of Mistakes Archive contains many letters, postcards, aerogrammes, typed, illustrated, hand-written… to and from friends and business associates including: Anthony McCall, Susan Hiller, The Arts Council, literary agent Giles Gordon, poet John Welch…



I hope they'll like. Have also given David 2 pages for Wallp
mag which I noted in a column I have in a French mag. If enc

5th March, 1976

Dear Anthony,

I'm up to my eyes with reading at the moment - authors seem to have delivered commissioned books all together - but I've taken time off to look at the manuscript of ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE ART which you left in here.

Certainly this could make an interesting book but once again I regre to say I don't,rightly or wrongly, see it as something which an educational publisher would regard as something which they could sell wel This would mean that the advance would be minimal, and I'd have my doubts as to whether any publisher would in fact in the present extremely difficult climate make an offer.

dear anthony- I heard it thro the grapevine,
which (you've guessed it!@)extends even to kali's
ghat...

POST CARD

that your art show project (cant remember correct
name-- have definitely lost 50% of my english voc-
abulary for the dubious benefit of gaining a few
words in hindi-bengali-urdu...maybe it will all
come back to me when i get back to london; maybe
not...)was a great success! and that one of the

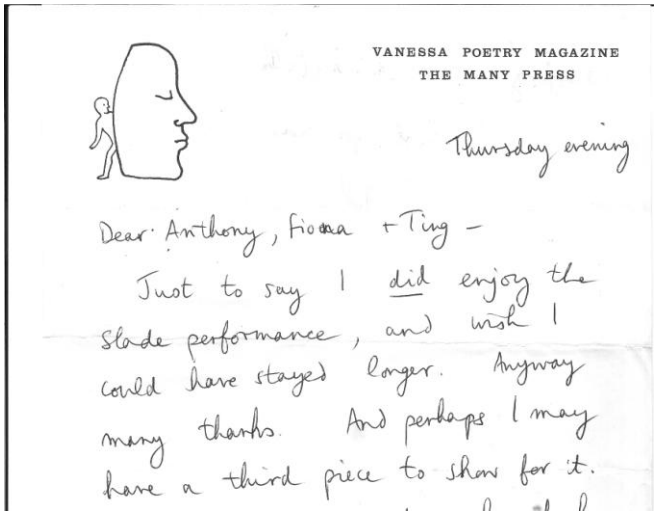
(Extracts of letters in The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)

List of letters

05-Dec-73	George Mattingly to AH re *The Hour Book*
12-Dec-73	? to AH
31-Mar-73	Anthony McCall to AH
10-Sep-74	Richard and Philippa Quarrell to AH and SH
07-Sep-74	Anthony McCall to AH and SH
08-Oct-74	Marion Boyars to AH re *Wallpaper*
15-Apr-74	Anthony McCall to AH
23-Jun-74	Anthony McCall to AH re *Wallpaper*
17-Nov-74	Richard Quarrell to AH
nd	Susan Bonvin to AH re *Device for Looking at Landscape*
nd	Postcard unsigned (AM?) to Ting
nd	Sylvia re Ting and masks
nd	Susan Hiller to AH re Dreams
nd	Christopher Hobbs and John White [bio]
16-Nov-75	Pippa, Emma and Dix to AH
18-Mar-75	Abrul Hadi to AH and SLH
nd	Susan Hiller to SLH
31-Mar-75	David Coxhead
17-Aug-75	Tom Lowenstein? To AH
nd	Michael Karl Ritchie to AH
nd	Graham Snow to AH re Ting
20-Oct-75	Michael Greenall to ? Wales
14-Jun-75	Carlyle Reedy to AH re *The Street* rehearsals
30-Aug-75	AH to Adrian re Philippines
27-Nov-75	Bill Shepherd to AH re Ting and *Wallpaper*
Nd	AH to ? re contribution for Fiver Show
Nd	AH to Keith Burgess? - re Fiver Show
Nd	AH to Anthony McCall - re Fiver Show
01-May-76	Paul Buck to AH
05-Mar-76	Giles Gordon to AH re *Elements*
nd	Susan Bonvin to AH re Amanda Welch work

nd	Susan Bonvin? to AH re Wallpaper and Fiver Show
09-Jan-76	Giles Gordon to AH
03-May-76	Typed Invoice University of Wisconsin Wallpaper
	Maidstone College Library to AH
02-Jun-76	re unreturned library book on Longhi!
nd	GLA re financial assistance
nd	Susan Hiller to AH
nd	John Welch to AH, FT and Ting re Slade
nd	Susan Bonvin to AH re Ting
nd	Graham Snow to AH
23-Mar-76	Sue Grayson at Serpentine to AH re Summer Show
17-Feb-76	Anthony McCall on Manifesto of Mutual Art
16-Aug-77	AH to BBC re *Waterfall*
17-Aug-77	Reply to above
19-Aug-77	AH to BBC re *Waterfall*
23-Aug-77	reply to above
01-Sep-77	AH reply to above
05-Oct-78	Henry Meyric Hughes, British Council
16-Nov-78	Ray Smith, Uni of Southampton to AH
31-Aug-78	Don Marinelli, Uni of Pittsburgh to AH
01-Dec-78	Andrew Dempsey, London Exhibition
19-Oct-78	Ron Padgett, Poetry Project to AH
20-Oct-78	Henry Meyric Hughes, British Council to AH
30 Nov-10 Dec-78	Box office receipts *Going* Theater for the New City
28-Nov-78	Paul A Rolin to Dr Katz re *Going* (prison)
12-Sep-78	Douglas Baxter to AH re PC Gallery Nov 11
17-Aug-79	Peter Bird ACE to AH
18-Dec-84	Lady Lodge Arts Centre to AE; h/w note AE to AH
01-Jun-85	AE to AH

See also: *Rape of the Mind* (1978) the text of which is composed from letters Anthony Howell had written/received.



VANESSA POETRY MAGAZINE
THE MANY PRESS

Thursday evening

Dear Anthony, Fiona + Ting –

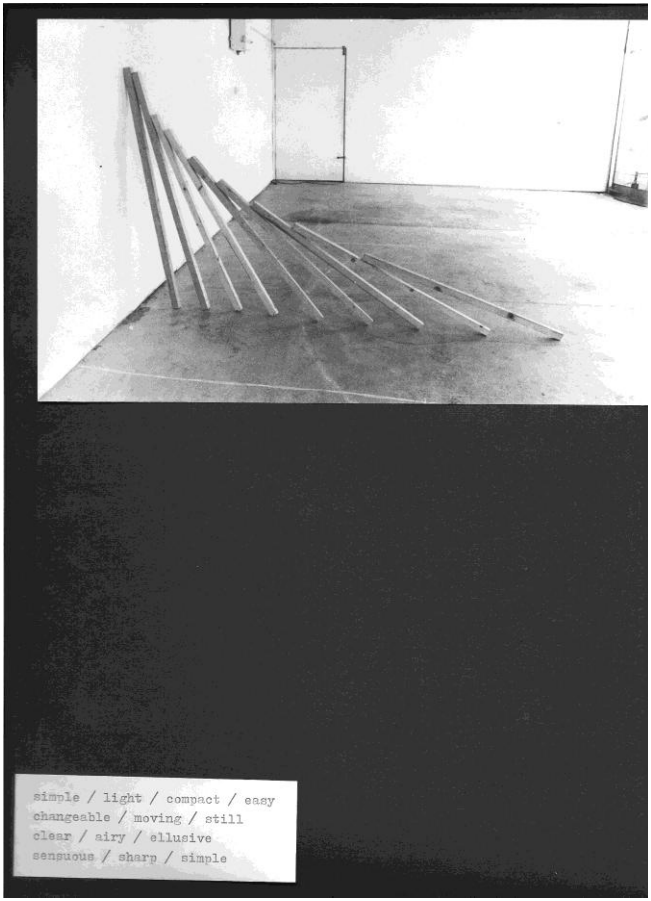
Just to say I did enjoy the Slade performance, and wish I could have stayed longer. Anyway many thanks. And perhaps I may have a third piece to show for it.

Extract from letter by John Welch (see Poetry) to Anthony Howell, 1976. The pieces referred to would have been Welch's poems inspired by Ting performances.

Line



Mickey Greenall and Fiona Templeton in *Head Turns*
Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Robert Janz work documented by The Ting, c. 1974, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

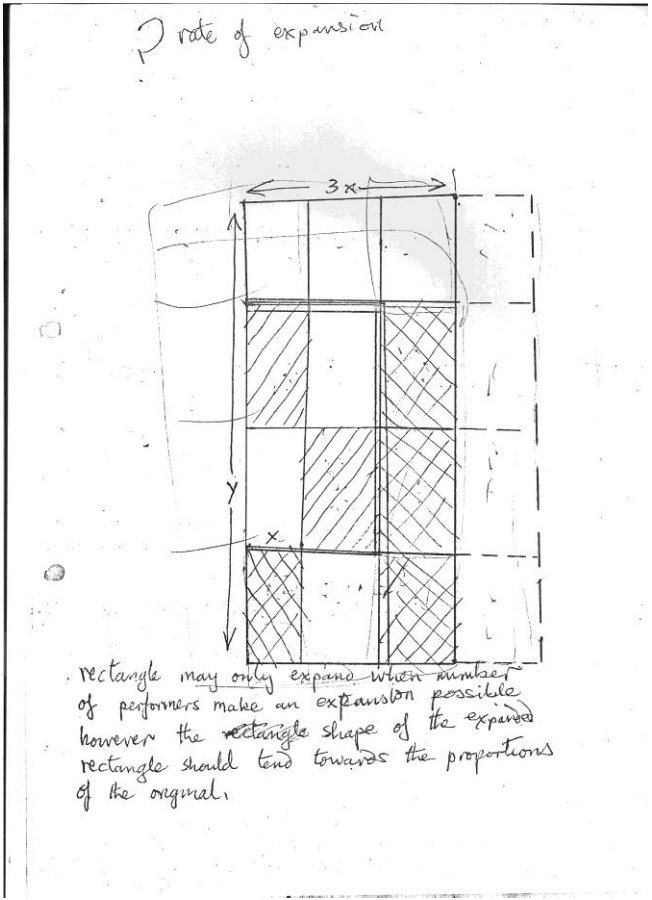


Diagram relating to *The Street* in The Theatre of Mistakes Archive, nd, c.1975



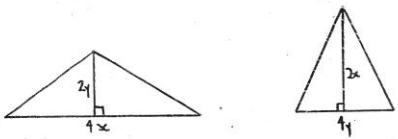
Contact sheet: *Anti-Gravity* Photos:©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

SPACE BOXES (continued)

Other Space Shapes

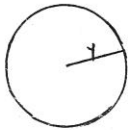
The area described by one's space box may be changed in shape provided one uses as measurements the two body distances X and Y. *

E.G. As a triangle:



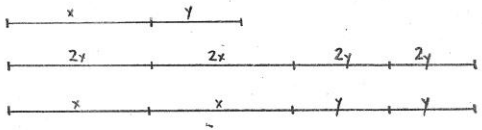
space triangles

As a circle



space circles

As a line



space lines

* These space shapes have no three dimensional significance.

26

London Calling

1. Song by The Clash

London calling to the faraway towns
Now war is declared - and battle come down
London calling to the underworld
Come out of the cupboard,you boys and girls
London calling, now don't look to us
Phoney Beatlemania has bitten the dust
London calling, see we ain't got no swing
'Cept for the ring of that truncheon thing

CHORUS
The ice age is coming, the sun's zooming in
Meltdown expected, the wheat is growing thin
Engines stop running, but I have no fear
Cause London is drowning and I, live by the river

London calling to the imitation zone
Forget it, brother, you can go at it alone
London calling to the zombies of death
Quit holding out - and draw another breath
London calling - and I don't wanna shout
But while we were talking I saw you nodding out
London calling, see we ain't got no high
Except for that one with the yellowy eyes

CHORUS x2
The ice age is coming, the sun's zooming in
Engines stop running, the wheat is growing thin
A nuclear error, but I have no fear
Cause London is drowning and I, I live by the river

Now get this
London calling, yes, I was there, too
An' you know what they said? Well, some of it was true!
London calling at the top of the dial
And after all this, won't you give me a smile?

London Calling

I never felt so much alike, like-a, like-a...

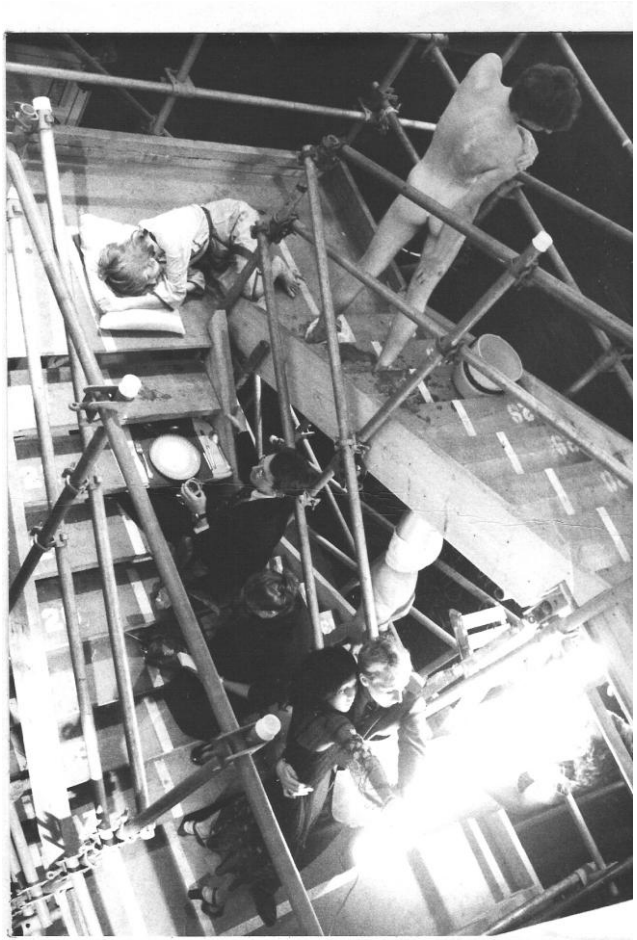
2. See: **Fiver Show**

London Exhibition (Covent Garden, October 1975)
See also: *Waterfall*



The Theatre of Mistakes at the London Exhibition
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Three Act Piece by 'The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes' was performed at the London Exhibition in 1975 as part of their *Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session*.



The London Exhibition, October 1975

London Film Makers Co-op

"A loose group of friends and colleagues, many recently out of art school, who were interested in filmmaking and began to work together. The Co-op was based in the old Camden Town dairy, and in retrospect what was so important was that there was film production going on as well as exhibition and distribution. So work was made, printed, screened, argued about, and an aesthetic emerged. Perhaps a number of aesthetics: structural-materialist film, landscape film, expanded cinema, and so on. It was a very productive situation for those who were part of it. The filmmaking culture was at the time a related but parallel universe to that of the art world, though they did overlap at certain moments"

(Julia Peyton-Jones and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Interview with Anthony McCall, New York, September 2007)

According to Anthony McCall, Anthony Howell was a member by adoption. (Interview: Anthony McCall, Jason E Bowman, Marie-Anne Mancio, London, 26th Sept, 2008)

"The hardcore 'structural / materialist' filmmaking that characterised much of the work produced at the LFMC in the early 1970s can be very challenging for the viewer. Anyone wandering in from the street, with the expectations of commercial (they used to call it "dominant") cinema would not understand these films at all. Not only is there no narrative, but there's most likely no people, no sound, no editing and sometimes no discernible imagery at all […] British work was much more loosely contrived [than US structuralism], and really concerned with the raw physicality of the film medium and the inherent properties of the celluloid strip."

(Mark Webber "Shoot Shoot Shoot" http://www. Luxonline.org.uk/tours /shoot_shoot_shoot(7).html)

View: Valerie Export who was there circa 1972.

Longhi, Pietro (1702-1785)

Scenes at a Table is dedicated to the painter Pietro Longhi (1702-1785), whose many variations on a single theme or a single posture, reappearing in dozens of his works, have been a source of inspiration to the company during the year. A number of the ideas exercised by the performers have been derived either from Longhi's use of similar angles in figure drawing or from his employment of eye glances as a geometry by which to establish the focal centre of a picture. Originally, several of Longhi's paintings were inspired by scenes at tables in the performances of 18th century Venice.

Program Notes: The Theatre of Mistakes *Homage to Pietro Longhi* (Nov 1976)



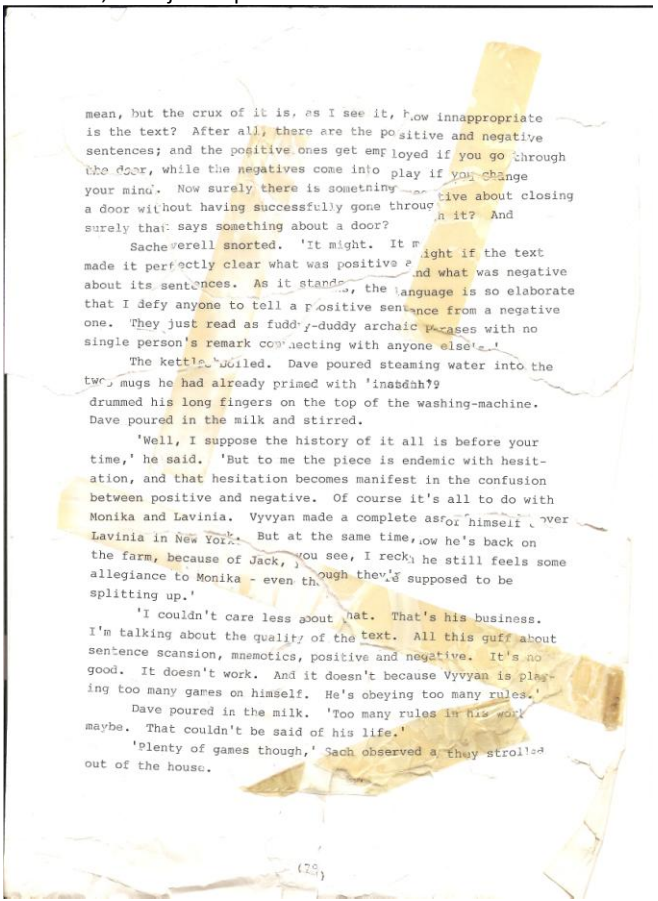
Pietro Longhi *The Quack* (1757)

Lost Farm

See also: Deborah Howell, Gwendolyn Leick, *Orpheus and Hermes*, Julian Maynard Smith, Miranda Payne

Anthony Howell's unpublished novel compresses the events of a decade at the farm into one day. It seeks to show action without becoming embroiled in any of the internal thought processes of its

characters. Together with photographs and participants' memories, it conjures up a vision of Purdies.



mean, but the crux of it is, as I see it, how innappropriate is the text? After all, there are the positive and negative sentences; and the positive ones get employed if you go through the door, while the negatives come into play if you change your mind. Now surely there is something positive about closing a door without having successfully gone through it? And surely that says something about a door?

Sach erell snorted. 'It might. It might if the text made it perfectly clear what was positive and what was negative about its sentences. As it stands, the language is so elaborate that I defy anyone to tell a positive sentence from a negative one. They just read as fuddy-duddy archaic phrases with no single person's remark connecting with anyone else's.'

The kettle boiled. Dave poured steaming water into the two mugs he had already primed with 'instant'? drummed his long fingers on the top of the washing-machine. Dave poured in the milk and stirred.

'Well, I suppose the history of it all is before your time,' he said. 'But to me the piece is endemic with hesitation, and that hesitation becomes manifest in the confusion between positive and negative. Of course it's all to do with Monika and Lavinia. Vyvyan made a complete ass of himself over Lavinia in New York. But at the same time, now he's back on the farm, because of Jack, you see, I reckon he still feels some allegiance to Monika - even though they're supposed to be splitting up.'

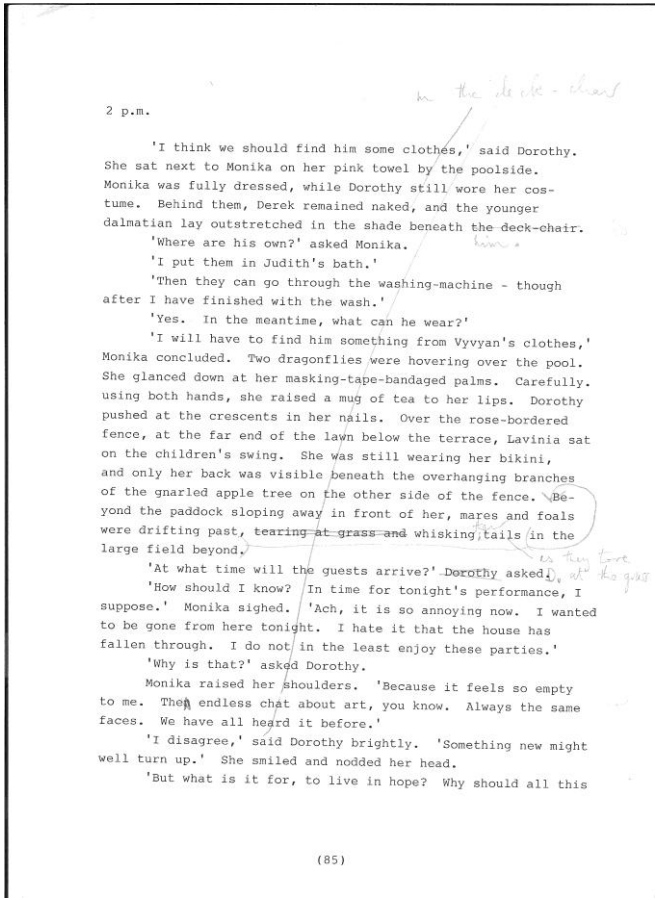
'I couldn't care less about that. That's his business. I'm talking about the quality of the text. All this guff about sentence scansion, mnemotics, positive and negative. It's no good. It doesn't work. And it doesn't because Vyvyan is playing too many games on himself. He's obeying too many rules.'

Dave poured in the milk. 'Too many rules in his work maybe. That couldn't be said of his life.'

'Plenty of games though,' Sach observed as they strolled out of the house.

(78)

Draft *Lost Farm* ©Anthony Howell



2 p.m.

'I think we should find him some clothes,' said Dorothy. She sat next to Monika on her pink towel by the poolside. Monika was fully dressed, while Dorothy still wore her costume. Behind them, Derek remained naked, and the younger dalmatian lay outstretched in the shade beneath the deck-chair.

'Where are his own?' asked Monika.

'I put them in Judith's bath.'

'Then they can go through the washing-machine - though after I have finished with the wash.'

'Yes. In the meantime, what can he wear?'

'I will have to find him something from Vyvyan's clothes,' Monika concluded. Two dragonflies were hovering over the pool. She glanced down at her masking-tape-bandaged palms. Carefully, using both hands, she raised a mug of tea to her lips. Dorothy pushed at the crescents in her nails. Over the rose-bordered fence, at the far end of the lawn below the terrace, Lavinia sat on the children's swing. She was still wearing her bikini, and only her back was visible beneath the overhanging branches of the gnarled apple tree on the other side of the fence. Beyond the paddock sloping away in front of her, mares and foals were drifting past, tearing at grass and whisking tails in the large field beyond.

'At what time will the guests arrive?' Dorothy asked.

'How should I know? In time for tonight's performance, I suppose.' Monika sighed. 'Ach, it is so annoying now. I wanted to be gone from here tonight. I hate it that the house has fallen through. I do not in the least enjoy these parties.'

'Why is that?' asked Dorothy.

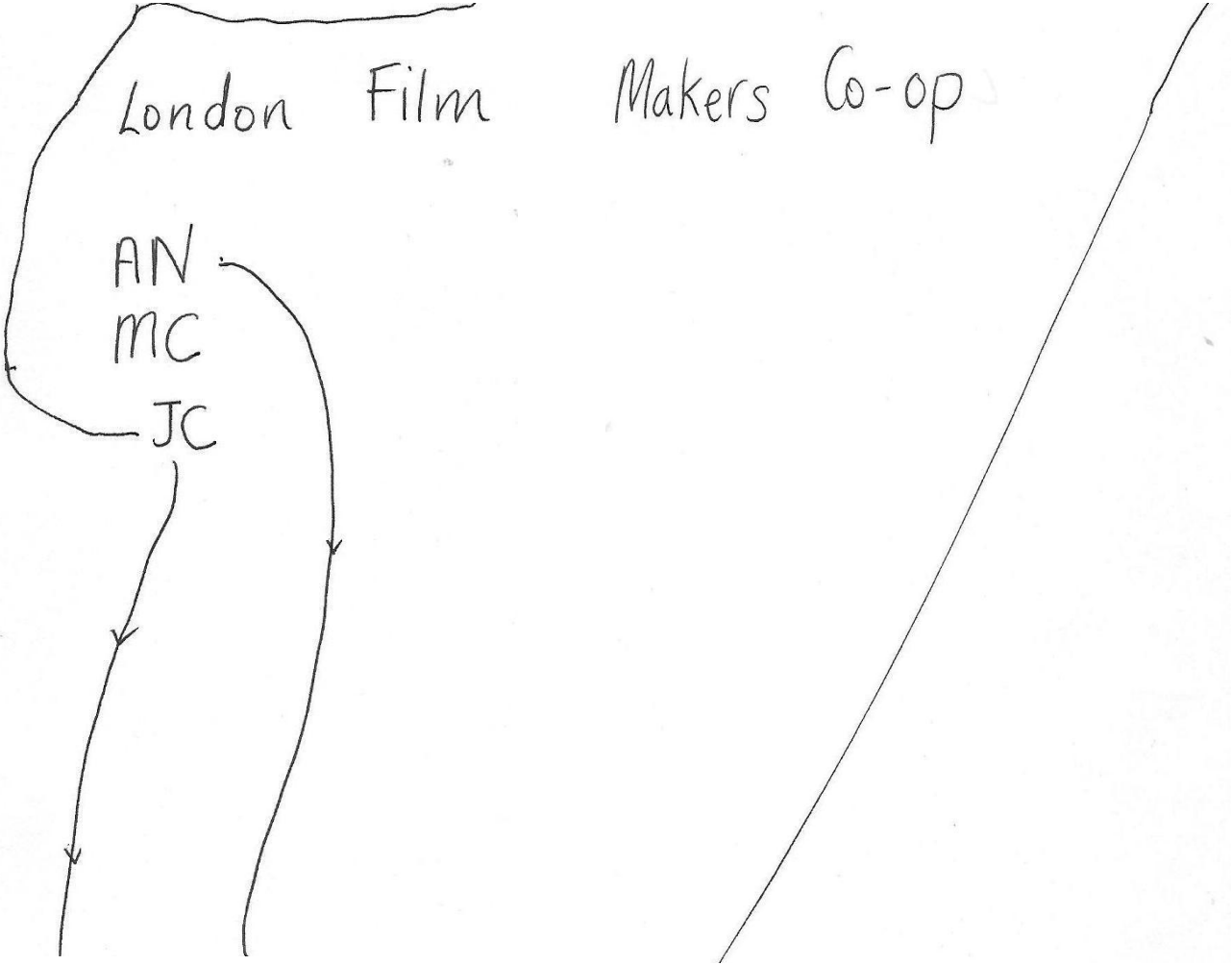
Monika raised her shoulders. 'Because it feels so empty to me. Then endless chat about art, you know. Always the same faces. We have all heard it before.'

'I disagree,' said Dorothy brightly. 'Something new might well turn up.' She smiled and nodded her head.

'But what is it for, to live in hope? Why should all this

(85)

Annotated draft page from *Lost Farm* ©Anthony Howell, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive


London Film Makers Co-op
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2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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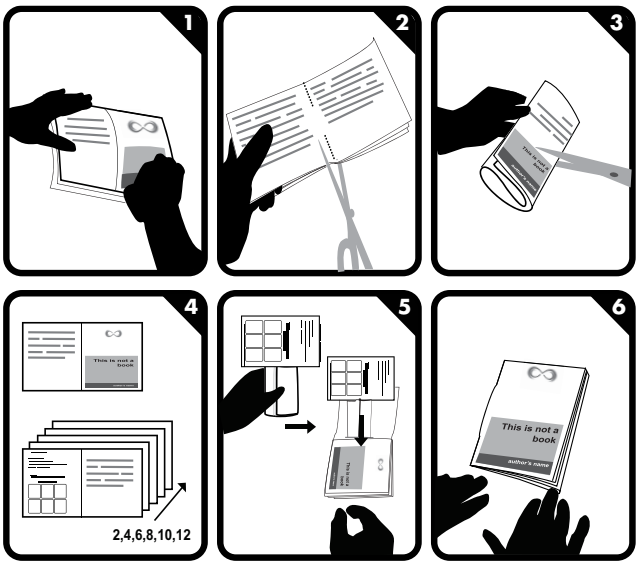

DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – M

Marie-Anne Mancio

Mancio, Marie-Anne

Maidstone

Manifesto
Maynard Smith, Julian

Mathematics
McCall, Anthony
Meeneley, Ed

Memory

Metronome

Mickey Greenall

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Moran, Lindsay

Morandi
Mud Man
Mullet

Murphy, Pat
Muse
Music
Mutuality

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

M

Marie-Anne Mancio

Mancio, Marie-Anne (1969-)
is a writer/critic who trained as an artist in performative practice at Manchester Metropolitan University prior to undertaking her D.Phil (*Maps for Wayward Performers*: *feminist readings of contemporary live art practice in Britain* University of Sussex, 1996), and a subsequent M.Phil in Creative Writing (Glasgow University) for which she was awarded a Distinction. A multi-folio practitioner, intrigued by the interface of fiction and critical writing, she is interested in developing processes that relate to the potential of contradiction. Her fiction deploys historic metaphor to comment on the present and to explore the impact of site on identities. In 2009, she was invited to join innovative practitioners DesignKommander and is currently investigating the deployment of the sensory in architecture. Select writings can be found on www.hotelalphabet.net.
See also: Jason E Bowman whose invaluable insight and generosity continue to inform my thinking.

Maidstone See **Art Schools**

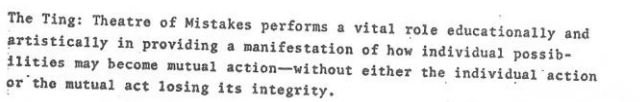
Manifesto
See also: Mutuality
Avantgardist 'groups' of the early twentieth century adopted the manifesto as a challenge to orthodox forms. A site for intersecting revolutionary and aesthetic discourses, these documents enabled a critique of modernity whilst promising to protect the autonomy of the individual within the collective. (See the Vorticist Blast Manifesto, 1914; Dada Manifesto, 1916, and so on). The 1960s and early Seventies saw a proliferation of manifestoes influenced by the emergent radical feminist and Civil rights initiatives. Artists who deployed the manifesto include the Situationists, Claes Oldenburg, Fluxus, Valie Export, and the British, politically-engaged theatre collective, Welfare State. According to Fiona Templeton, The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes' "Manifesto of Mutual Art" was "written during several meetings with artists August 1975-January 1976, London and Hampshire." It is seven pages long and almost parodic in its dense language. Detailing how art might be made mutually – a concern jointly investigated by Templeton, Mickey Greenall, and Anthony Howell – it allows for two possibilities to determine outcomes: unanimous decisions or, where this is impossible, Choice by Chance. Whilst some members of the Core group have no recollection of this Manifesto -

"I don't remember it… [laughs] I don't know if I would have signed that!"
(Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov, 2008)

other artists involved with Ting do:
"it [was] the main subject of conversation one time at Ascham Street…."
(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008).

It was also the subject of correspondence between Anthony McCall (resident in New York by then) and Anthony Howell:

"The virtue of the Manifesto is that it is immediately workable. It doesn't require the fulfilment of special circumstances before it can begin. It already, in the fact of its regular meetings, demonstrates another way of doing art."
(Anthony McCall, letter to Anthony Howell, 17th February, 1976, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)


The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes performs a vital role educationally and artistically in providing a manifestation of how individual possibilities may become mutual action—without either the individual action or the mutual act losing its integrity.

Program notes from *Two Journeys*, May, 1976

"THE MANIFESTO OF MUTUAL ART"

To arrive at a mutually expressed set of statements (see note 1), a minimum of three persons gathered together for an initial meeting should employ choice by chance (see note 2) to decide upon the ultimate form of those statements and their order.

It is suggested that if less than eight persons (but never less than three) gather together for this initial meeting each person at that meeting should be free to make two statements on the first page (see note 3) or employ two choices as to the order of those statements on subsequent pages, and the same for any comments (see note 4) on subsequent pages arising from those statements, until such time as the number of persons contributing statements at later meetings be doubled. At later meetings up to double the number of persons contributing statements at the initial meeting should be free to employ two choices as to the order of the statements and be free to make two comments on any subsequent page and in general to have the same rights as to the making or choosing of statements or comments as any who attended the initial meeting provided that those statements and comments remain within the prerequisites (see note 5) decided upon at that initial meeting: should the number of persons gathered at the initial meeting be more than doubled at a later meeting all persons gathered at any such and only such a meeting should be limited to one statement, choice of statement or comment each, regardless of whether or not they attended prior meetings.

It is further suggested that if eight or more persons gather together for the initial meeting each person at that meeting should be limited to one statement, comment or choice of statement or comment each.

At no time should statements, comments or pages or the order of statements, comments or pages be altered subsequent to the conclusion of work on that page.

Extract from *The Manifesto of Mutual Art* (dated Sept 1975, adopted Jan 1976) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

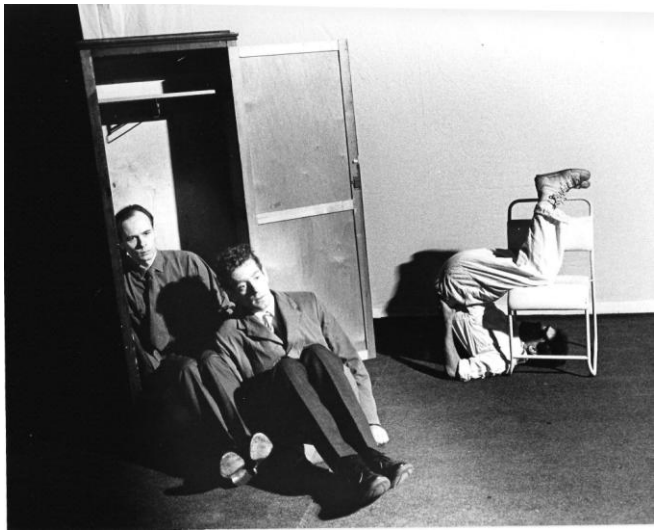
Maynard Smith, Julian (1951-)

See also: *Lost Farm*

Maynard Smith graduated in Fine Art from Hornsey (see: Art schools) in 1978 but performed with The Theatre of Mistakes before this after doing a workshop with Fiona Templeton. He participated in various works between 1975 and 1981 including *Lecture Performance* (November 1975), *Two Journeys* (May 1976), *Waterfall* (1977), *Orpheus and* Hermes (1979), and *Homage to Morandi* (1980). His major contribution was in shifting the company's direction:

"he has helped clarify many of the company's concepts - Especially in MORANDI"

(Theatre of Mistakes Program for Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre, March 1981)



Julian Maynard Smith (centre) in *Homage to Morandi* Photo: Ray Smith

Maynard Smith and Miranda Payne went on to form Station House Opera with Alison Urquhart in 1980. He said of the difference between Station House Opera and The Theatre of Mistakes:

"The Theatre of Mistakes, although it had things it called 'inconsistent behaviours' was extremely tightly ruled. We wanted to do something a bit looser and freer. It never took into account the vagaries of the system. There would be certain cases when you would do something, where you'd hold a position until, you know, you physically couldn't do it anymore and then you'd fall over. It's still tied in to a kind of dance-oriented idea. Station House would take on a much more natural system - extracted from something that already existed in the world. So it was more flexible, more descriptive."

(Julian Maynard Smith in www.vizlang.co.uk/readings/Smith)

Mathematics

See Exercises, Peter Stickland, Fiona Templeton

Through its deployment of additive and subtractive structures, The Theatre of Mistakes perpetuated the lengthy relationship between art and mathematics (Renaissance painting and perspective; architecture and Platonic solids; Islamic patterning etc.)

Titles: *Two Journeys, Three Act Piece,* Three Movements Exercise, *Waterfall Three, Four Artists*, *Five Concert Pieces*, Summer Show 5, *Six Sticks* (Robert Janz), Nine Units Exercise, The Ninth Method,

American artist Richard Quarrell (see *Wallpaper* – wallpaper itself being an example of pattern) made audio works of ascending and descending numerical sequences. E.g. *four sums with the same answers*.

McCall, Anthony (1946-)

See also: London Film Makers Co-op, *Wallpaper*

"The other Anthony" Long-standing friend of Anthony Howell whose first fire work – *Landscape for Fire I* – occurred at the wedding of Howell and Signe Lie (Howell). His then partner was performance artist Carolee Schneeman.

Andrew Eden: "Anthony [McCall] was the most connected person except for Annabel Nicholson with the [London] Film Co-op"

(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008).

McCall left London for New York in January 1973 but recalls early Ting performances in the Dairy and at Michael McKinnon's studio. He describes them as highly structured pieces containing ritualized movement and rules, in which all participants were deemed authors. "People were the medium."

(Interview: Anthony McCall, Jason E Bowman, London, 26th Sept 2008)

His work shares The Theatre of Mistakes' concern with structures. This is what he wrote about his 16mm, 30min film *Line Describing a Cone* that begins with:

"a pencil of light that runs through space from the projector to the wall. The image on the wall at that point is just a dot with white lines. That dot on the wall gradually traces a circle leaving a trail behind it. It traces it very, very slowly. It takes half an hour to define an entire circle and in the end you have a complete hollow cone of light in space. This has a certain drama to it as it completes its circle as it turns around and of course there are no surprises: everyone can see where it is going and then they kind of begin to quite eagerly wait for it to complete itself."

http://www.tate.org.uk/tateshots/episode.jsp?item=9117

Meeneley, Ed
American abstract painter who had an exhibition at the Whitechapel in 1973 and at the Art Room along with Susan Hiller and Lindsay Moran in 1976, a grouping Moran refers to as "totally disparate again" and indicative of the openness of the art initiatives around Ting.
(Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov, 2008)

Memory

> My interest in conversation stems from an attempt to find a way of allowing performers to create their own dialogue while limiting the vocabulary used in order to confer a unity of style to what is being said. In Conversation Cards (first performed A.M.P. November 1974) single instructions from the matrix of possibilities obtained by combining any one instruction in the list above with any other (Make a command out of any previous negative query)are dealt out to the players on conventional playing cards, while it is suggested that the vocabulary be limited to pronouns and the player's names in conjunction with those verbs commonly employed in auxilliary and/or copulative positions (i.e. the verbs to be, to have, to do, plus could, would, should, must et alia). In these terms, a play becomes a matter of remembering what has been said earlier, rather than learning a speech or a part by heart prior to the performance: memory thus becomes integral to the "drama".

Anthony Howell, essay "The Art of Conversation," The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

What is the role of memory in the work of The Theatre of Mistakes?
Vicki Chick recalls being asked how The Ting remembered all the intricate choreographies. (They didn't; they were improvised.)
In phenomenological terms, the absences that follow presence differ from those prior to it; the latter are concerned with anticipation, the former with memory. The memories of the participants and observers of Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes are riddled with contradictions that range from the use of their name (Fiona Templeton and Peter Stickland recall "The Ting" was dropped early on; performance flyers and reviews show otherwise) to who did what (was it Templeton or Greenall who painstakingly coloured in Scene Diagrams for *Homage to Pietro Longhi*? Was it Howard Tong or Anthony Howell who invented the concept of *The Doors*?) It is hardly surprising. The memories in this text were mostly collated in 2008-9 and relate to events beginning in the early Seventies through to the early Eighties. There was hindsight and forgetting; forgiveness or elision in between.

This is partly due to the fluid nature of the co-operative (even that word has too many connotations to be accurate): between the initial Ting and the later core group, The Theatre of Mistakes. This movement epitomises The Theatre of Mistakes – performers involved in very intense periods of engagement then not at all; others consistently there in supportive roles as audiences, collaborators, critics; the blurred boundaries between artistic practices and social/romantic encounters… Then there is the importance of mutuality, epitomised by the stamp and signature created by Howell, Templeton, and Greenall, which suggests it is paradoxical or at least irrelevant to apportion credit for this or that idea. (Whose idea was it to focus on mutuality?)

Even the documentation held in The Theatre of Mistakes' archive is an unreliable narrator since it is more a testament to the company's constant need for redefinition according to the multiple uses of the same texts: as publicity, as Arts Council applications, as attempts to hone conceptual strategies, as program notes.

Participants' memories also have different qualities: from the evocative linear analysis of Pat Murphy to the fragmented, impressionistic flashbacks of Howard Tong. Yet there are enough repetitions. Memories take on the quality of music, of variations on the same theme. Of choruses.

See also Mistakes.

Metronome

The metronome is a device evident from the early work of Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes. In *Preparations for Displacement* (1975). It reappears in *Three Act Piece* (1976) and in *Scenes at a Table, Homage to Pietro Longhi* (1976), and *Going* (1977).

Metronome:-
Walk entirely round the performance space from the corner where the reciter is seated and ending up in that same corner at the end of the first act. In act two walk at the same regular pace

Instructions for the metronome in *Three Act Piece* (February 1976)

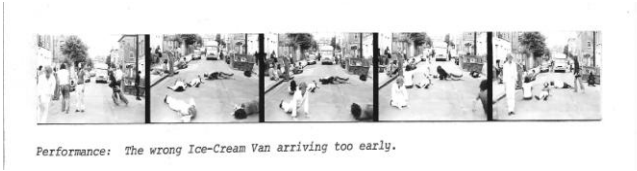
Mickey Greenall: see **Greenall, Mickey**

Minimalism

See **Conceptualism** and also: Economics

The music of Michael Nyman; objects of Donald Judd; the choreography of Yvonne Rainer….
Minimalist maxims:
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: *Less is more*
Cf Dieter Rams: *Less but better*
[not to be confused with Robert Venturi: *Less is a bore*]

Mistakes



Documentation of *The Street*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Traditionally, the performance mistake might comprise the missed cue; lack of synchronization; failure to enter or exit at the correct moment; limb raised to an incorrect height; faulty rhythm. It makes a comedy or a tragedy of technique: stumbled pirouettes, flat notes, collapsing sets, jokes without punchlines… A mistake can be corrected/ atoned for/concealed.

The mistake, whether accidental or deliberate, creates a rupture in form. Assuming form is rarely read until it is broken, The Theatre of Mistakes are practiced at looking for the mistake, at asking: what are the best errors to make to highlight structure? The historiography of the mistake in The Theatre of Mistakes' work alters. It begins as the only thing they can say; to being seriously on the surface (*Homage to Pietro Longhi*); to becoming the fully rehearsed mistake which has retreated from the surface (*Going*); to the mistake that occurs "in the thinking before the work has even been devised" (Peter Stickland on *Homage to Morandi* Conversations: London, Nov 2008).



Peter Stickland *Going* Photo: ©Lindsay Moran

"the built in, calculated flaw in the perfect carpet, the way you know you are human, the trickster element subverting best laid plans, the place where conflict intensifies outside narrative context and the place where narratives might begin."
(Pat Murphy, response to Questionnaire, December 2008)

Amongst the papers of The Theatre of Mistakes Archive, are several undated (c.1978) biographies of performers including: Fiona Templeton, Howard Tong, Peter Stickland, Julian Maynard Smith, Brigitte Roth [photographer and performer], and Miranda Payne. The latter and Tong's bios contain similar mistakes.

Where is the mistake in the following?

MIRANDA PAYNE

Born 1954. Worked with the Bird in Hand Theatre Company on two plays performed at the Hoxton Hall and at the Mercury Theatre. Studied at Maidstone College of Art. Performed with the Theatre of Mistakes in "Preparations for Displacement" (Cambridge Poetry Festival 1974), and "The Street" (Kentish Town 1974). Created "Pairs' Game", which was first performed by the company in 1974 at The Southampton Performance Show. Performed with the same company at The London Exhibition 1974, and "Pairs' Game" was performed at the Slade in 1975. I then worked on a production of "Rank"—a play about the Windsor Free Festival—in 1976: this was performed at the Roundhouse Downstairs and went on tour in Devon and Cornwall. I also performed in "A Waterfall" at the Hayward Gallery 1977.

I enclose The Theatre of Mistakes '75 brochure, which has photographs of "Pairs' Game" taken at the Southampton Performance Show.

See Solution

Suggested Deliberate Swoons and Mistakes:

Act 1: orthodox.

Act 2: Scene 2 (mistake necessitating reversal):
The Metronome omits to take off his or her jacket. When the performer of Primary Scene A looks, with his or her hands on the shoulders of the performer now in the first position on the line, at the performer of Primary Scene B, the other performer still on the line calls a "Hold it" to freeze all performers. The performer who called goes to the Metronome and, hands on the Metronome's shoulders, moves him or her slowly back to the corner at the beginning of that side (corner q).
Meanwhile the two performers who have already entered the square perform backwards and silently all that they had just done in that scene until they, the performer who had moved up the line, and the Metronome return simultaneously to their positions for the start of that scene. The performer who called tells the Metronome "You do not know how to leave", and returns to position. The adjacent performer calls "O.K." and the scene begins again with the Metronome's "Yes".

Scene 4 (swoon):
Performer 5, frozen beside the table, swoons as performer Primary Scene B, to push the performer of Primary Scene A to the ground. This may be a double swoon, if the performer of Primary Scene C is knocked out of position

Act 3: Scene 5 (wrongly corrected mistake):
As performer 1 steps from being frozen beside the table into Primary Scene C, performer 5 should do so simultaneously. Just as both are about to cough "Ahem" performer 5 calls "Hold it" to freeze all performers, returns performer 1 to the position beside the table, corrects him or her by giving him instructions for his

These notes accompanying the 'script' for *Going* (see Bibliography) attest to the complexity of the structure and variations on the mistake

Q: Why Theatre of Mistakes?

A: If you can see the mistake you can begin telling how things should have gone had they gone right. Identify the mistake and you have identified the sum. The swifter the recognition of an error, the swifter the realisation of the intention. When things are going really well we always seem to be admitting lots of mistakes.

I suppose we all hope that the methods by which we go about matters are methods proven beyond phrases of avowal or disavowal—but the principles by which we live, born of traditional procedures or enlightened hunches, have to be confirmed via the rigours of experiment. So here, hopefully, is a company expecting the drama to be revealed by its flaws; a company which continually adjusts the drama in accordance with the proofs of better ways to do things.

Thus a theatre of mistakes, like an operating theatre or a theatre of war, is a place where a specific job is going on: it is a theatre where adjustments are to be made, faults recognised—as much on the part of the audience as on the part of the performers.

A theatre effectively based on the principle that change is the norm—that would be a classical theatre, something to last for all time.

A.H. April '77

Statement by Anthony Howell, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Moran, Lindsay (1952-)

Not to be confused with former CIA officer and author of *Blowing my Cover, My Life as a Spy*.

8. Lindsay Moràn works with ting theatre of mistakes. Young Scots artist, won Scottish young contemporarys prize in 1972, exhibited in Stowells exhibiti-n 1975. I like the way he uses outline to create an almost 3d effect and the high drama of the work. Quite young, one doesn't know what he intends to do, can't tell, but to buy is to invest in a future I have great faith in whichever direction it takes him.

Anthony Howell in the *Fiver Show* introduction, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Moran was recruited by Fiona Templeton (see Art Schools) and stayed with The Theatre of Mistakes for exactly one year, from July 1975-July 1976, performing in works such as *Three Act Piece, Lecture Performance*, *Two Journeys*.



Lindsay Moran (centre) in *Three Act Piece*, Covent Garden, October 1975
Photo:©The Theatre of Mistakes

Lindsay Moran's response when pressed to analyse his contribution to The Theatre of Mistakes:
"I was a good performer. I didn't mind if it was painful or whatever and I was game and he [Anthony Howell] knew that. Whether it was standing still for ages or jumping up and down till it hurt… really pushing it…. I enjoyed that aspect. And when it came to doing stand-up, there was an element of that which I never forgot from The Theatre of Mistakes."
(Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov, 2008)

Howard Tong recalls being very much in awe of his ideas. Moran also exhibited at the Art Room with his solo show *Some Matterhorns* and took iconic photographs of *Going* (see below), wrote and performed stand-up comedy, and has recently returned to painting.



Photo:© Lindsay Moran, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



ART

Fit of peak

LINDSAY MORAN is obsessed by the Matterhorn. The mountain haunts him. He is unable to push its extraordinary peak from his mind. From pictures of it, he makes his own, combining them incongruously with recurring objects.

"If I went to look at the Matterhorn I'd probably be disillusioned," he says, surrounded by an exhibition of his work in The Art Room, which is run by poet Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton, at 11 Ascham Street, Kentish Town.

Moran strives hard to be original, placing, for instance, shoes and a string of pink hearts up the mountain. The effect is remote and gently displaced but fails to stir.

These are comparatively painstaking pieces—so is a large painting with a ship and a spotted fish leaping through life belts. A cold detachment distinguishes such work but sometimes Moran relaxes and draws a series of slap dash images—like his tables—one is "a special table with five legs and two bottles and two shadows though one is wrong." This should give you some idea of his heady spontaneity.

And there is "a particular snow scene—falling on a falling Eiffel Tower which in turn is falling on a thatched cottage. The fence is absent."

"I like to take different ideas from different tangents and bring them together to create another atmosphere," he explains when asked to elaborate. To some extent the re-creation happens, but it is often a dour or ragged experience.

The Art Room is quiet and casual. Whoever is around will make you a cup of tea and leave you to browse at paintings and a selection of magazines—mostly poetry published on a shoestring. There are readings too.

Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton are also responsible for The Ting; Theatre of Mistakes—where verbal and aural exercises are performed in accordance with problems of time, space, number and articulation, or emerge merely at random.

● Lindsay Moran, with his offbeat interpretation of a harbour, in The Art Room.

2—Express & News, June 18, 1976

David Hockney was given his own private view of *Some Matterhorns;* more than one person has suggested Hockney appeared to have been influenced by what he saw.

Morandi (1890-1964)
Italian painter known for his exquisite still lifes.



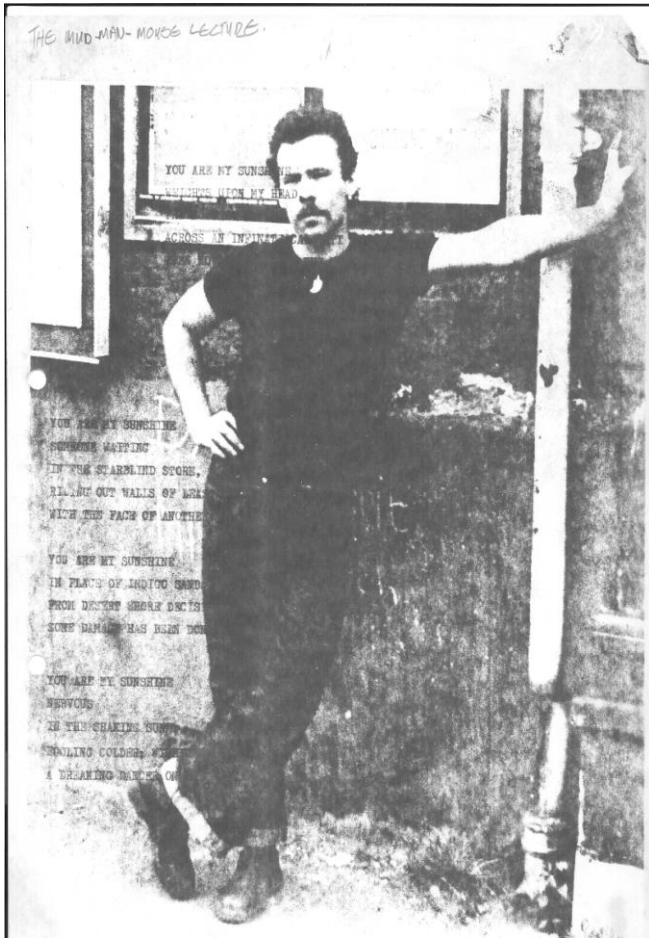


See: ***Homage to Morandi***

Mud Man
A performance created by Mikey Greenall and Howard Tong.

Mullet David Spathaky (see Performers) had one.

Murphy, Pat
Studied Fine Art ("moving from a painting/ printing/ photography practice to performance and film") at Hornsey where she met Robert Janz who was lecturing there. In July of her final year (1974) Janz took her along to the Ting's inaugural meeting. She recalls her participation in the following: *The Street*, The Roundhouse Studio, *Preparations for Displacement*, Regent's Park (1975), Hornsey College of Art (June 1975), *Two Journeys* (May 1976). Murphy's response to the Questionnaire, notable for its clarity and the depth of its insights, is cited throughout this *A-Z*.



Mickey Greenall *The Mud Man Lecture* nd c.1975
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

> Another practitioner of the art of conversation is Pat Murphy. A student at Hornsey College of Art, Murphy strings 5 minute slots of conversation together on a reel to reel. The nice thing about her tape is that it can just run on and on, and people can't stay listening to what's being said for long because every 5 minutes they stumble into a new situation. So after a while they just stop listening. But later on, when they've started their own conversation, one or two drop out of that and drift into a comparison of the two conversations—the live one and the one recorded. Then a fresh 5 minute slot takes over.

Anthony Howell, essay "The Art of Conversation," The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

See also: Art Schools, Jane Clark, Influences, Introduction, Legacy, Memory, Mistakes, Purdies, Theatre, Women

Muse

See *Orpheus and Hermes*; Miranda Payne

Music

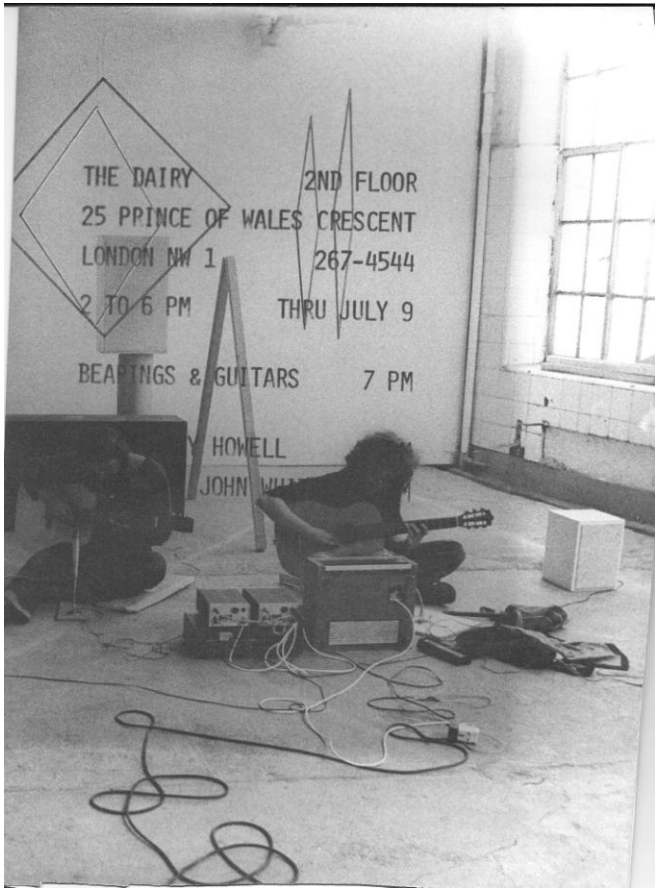
See also: Michael Nyman, Unattributed

"Obviously, some of the Theatre of Mistakes' structures were identical to the ones being used by Philip Glass"

(Julian Maynard Smith in www.vizlang.co.uk/readings/Smith)

Composer John White collaborated with Anthony Howell, Andrew Eden, and Fergus Early in One Rule Game (Hampstead Heath, 1974).

Note: the use of koans in *Waterfall*; also songs in *Going*.



An event at The Dairy in 1974 with Anthony Howell and John White. Whilst this prefigured Ting, it attests to Howell's interest in interdisciplinarity.

Mutuality

Anthony Howell, Fiona Templeton, and Mickey Greenall devise a Mutuality signature and stamp; there is a Manifesto of Mutuality. There are some beautiful Scene Diagrams, coloured in gold and felt tip pen. The latter are Mickey's work, Anthony is certain. Fiona is equally certain she made them. Mickey is no longer around to ask. In a sense it does not matter.



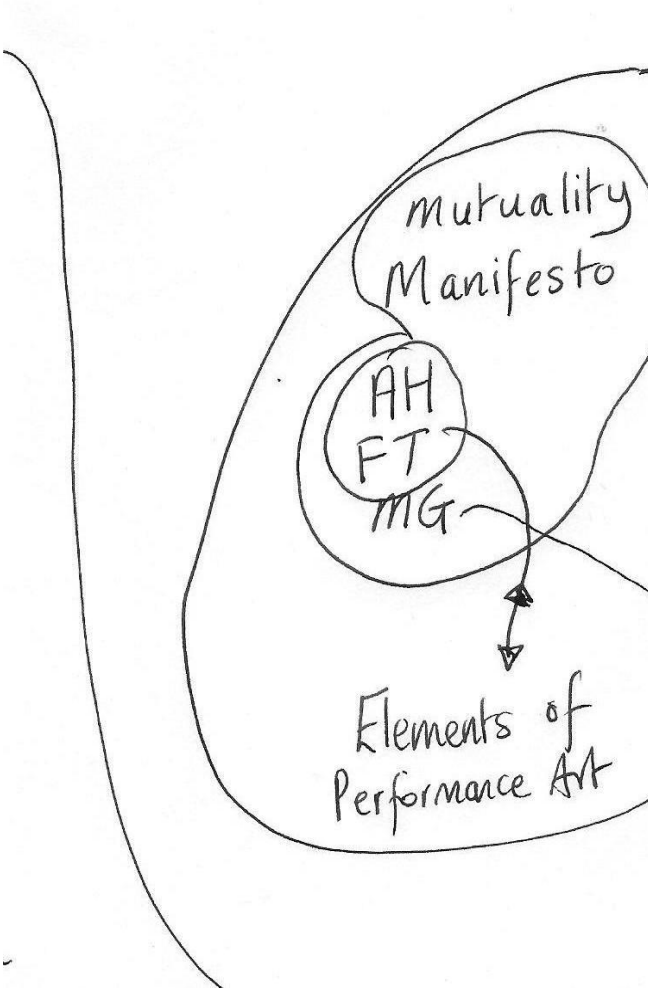
Mutuality drawings, 1976 Photos © courtesy of Fiona Templeton

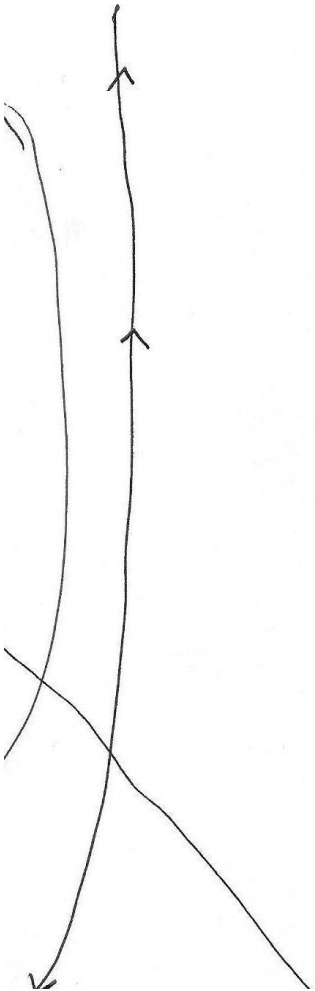
See also: Poetry



"Mutuality" holding the same pen
on top of each other:
Three gestures shared by three
1) Fiona below, Anthony in the middle, Mickey above.
2) Mickey below, Fiona in the middle, Anthony above.
3) Anthony below, Mickey in the middle, Fiona above.

Artwork: Mutuality Signature, 1976: Fiona Templeton, Anthony Howell, Mickey Greenall, unframed, A4 size, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive


Mutuality
Manifesto
AH
FT
MG
Elements of
Performance Art



2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
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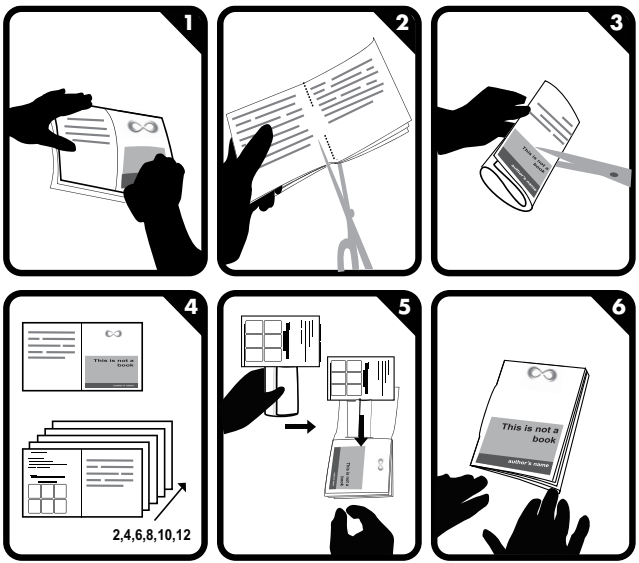


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – N & O

Marie-Anne Mancio

Nameless

Narrative

New York

Nicholson, Annabel

Nostalgia

Notes

Nucleus

Nyman, Michael

Omissions

One Rule Game

Orange

Orpheus and Hermes

Ostracism

Overdue

Owen, Mike

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

N-O

Marie-Anne Mancio

Nameless



Unknown participant in Ting workshop
Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Narrative

Madison Smartt Bell *Narrative Design* (see Bibliography):

"There are many possible structures for a narrative, but the most common, familiar, and conventional of these is linear design. Linear stories start at the beginning, traverse some sort of middle, and stop at the end"

"all linear designs bear some relationship to what is known as the Freitag triangle" (27)

This comprises an exposition, climax, and resolution. This Freitag triangle can be divided into another 5 parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

The Theatre of Mistakes' attitude to narrative was that structure could stand in for it. Exchanging the linear for the circular, this narrative, this *A-Z* is equally concerned with more democratic structures.

See also: *Going,* Peter Stickland, Structure

New York

See Endings, Venues, *Wallpaper*

"New York in the [Seventies] was very different from the New York of now. And compared to London, the art world was quite centralised. There were a few vital galleries like Leo Castelli, Sonnabend, Paula Cooper, John Webber and Bykert, but at that time very few of my generation had galleries. So we went to each other's studios and showed in downtown alternative spaces like Artists Space, the Clocktower, Idea Warehouse, or The Kitchen, and in avant-garde film spaces like Millennium Film Workshop and the Collective for Living Cinema. For me that was the 1970s; the sharing of ideas and work completely under the commercial radar."

(Julia Peyton-Jones and Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Interview with Anthony McCall*, New York, Sept 2007)

The Ting had connections with New York as Anthony Howell's friend Anthony McCall relocated here in the early seventies with his then partner Carolee Schneemann. The Theatre of Mistakes toured there in 1978 with *Going* and *Waterfall 6* (Paula Cooper Gallery) and Fiona Templeton remained, establishing herself as an integral part of the performance scene.

A few 1970s New York moments:
1970 NY's first Gay Pride march, Christopher St; 1971 Andy Warhol at The Whitney; 1972 The World Trade Center opens; 1973 Martin Scorsese's *Mean Streets*; 1974 Philippe Petit walks a wire between the twin towers of the WTC; 1975 New York is on the brink of bankruptcy; 1977 a two-day blackout, looting, murders 'Son of Sam,' and disco fever; 1978 Richard Nixon's memoirs are on the bestseller list; 1979 Woody Allen's *Manhattan*.



New York in the 70s
Photos: ©The New York Times

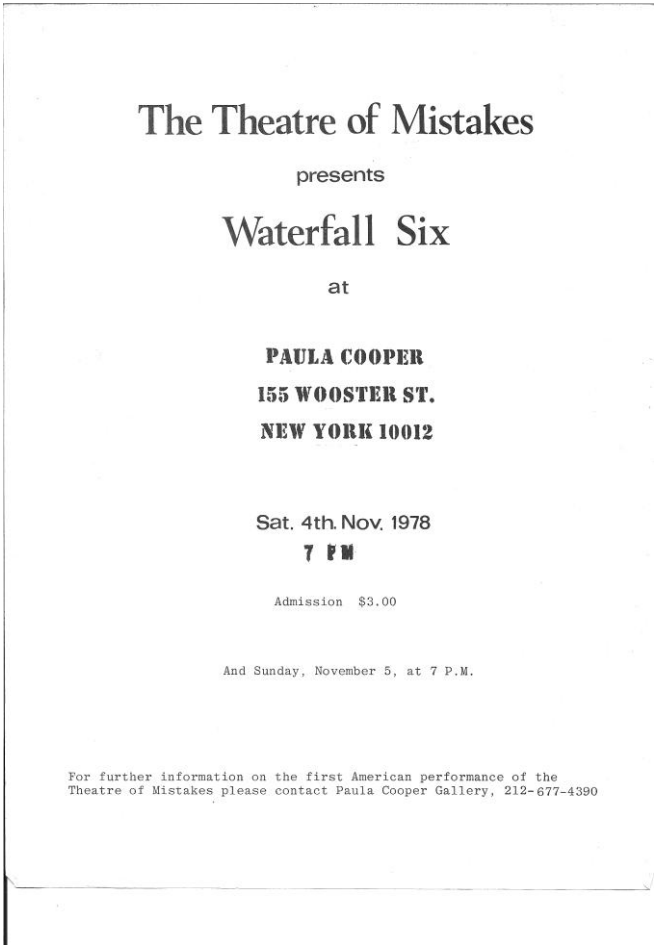
Nicholson, Annabel (1946-)

Film maker. Studied at Hornsey School of Art, then Edinburgh College of Art, and St. Martin's. She appeared in *The Street* (1975).

See also: Jane Clark, The Dairy, London Film Makers Co-op, *Wallpaper*

For a biography and filmography, see:
http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/annabel_nicolson/index.html

For an essay, see Felicity Sparrow "Annabel Nicholson: The Art of Light and Shadow" http:// www.luxonline. org.uk/ artists/ annabel_nicholson /essay(1).html



The Theatre of Mistakes

presents

Waterfall Six

at

PAULA COOPER
155 WOOSTER ST.
NEW YORK 10012

Sat. 4th. Nov. 1978
7 PM

Admission $3.00

And Sunday, November 5, at 7 P.M.

For further information on the first American performance of the Theatre of Mistakes please contact Paula Cooper Gallery, 212-677-4390

Flyer, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive, see Itinerary

Ninth Method
See Peter Stickland

Notation
See also Dance
Performance has created notation languages for itself. The play has the script with stage directions; music has the score; dance has Benesh or Labanotation; opera has the libretto … Then there is memory or the usefulness of the performer-teacher whose 'coaching' enables new generations to interpret these samples of notation with the benefit of extra-textual knowledge (that little bit of business the actor engaged in during their line; the height of the dancer's elevation in arabesque, and so on.) There is no sole notation system for performance/live art, though there have been attempts to establish one (see Bibliography). To codify an art form that has consistently refused to be defined, that has flourished in the inbetween, in the fluid and the unfixed, seems an act of contradiction. The interdisciplinary, multi-media aspect of much performance/live art also complicates acts of notation. Works are often filmed for convenience. The method we choose in notating a work are often indicative of the nature of our engagement with it: the actor will highlight the script, annotate, literally mark out their role in relevant sections (their speech, their cues, their entrances and exits….). A writer reviewing a work, may attempt to evoke the visible poetry through text, to render images unnecessary. The Theatre of Mistakes adopted a gamut of notation systems (see Documentation).

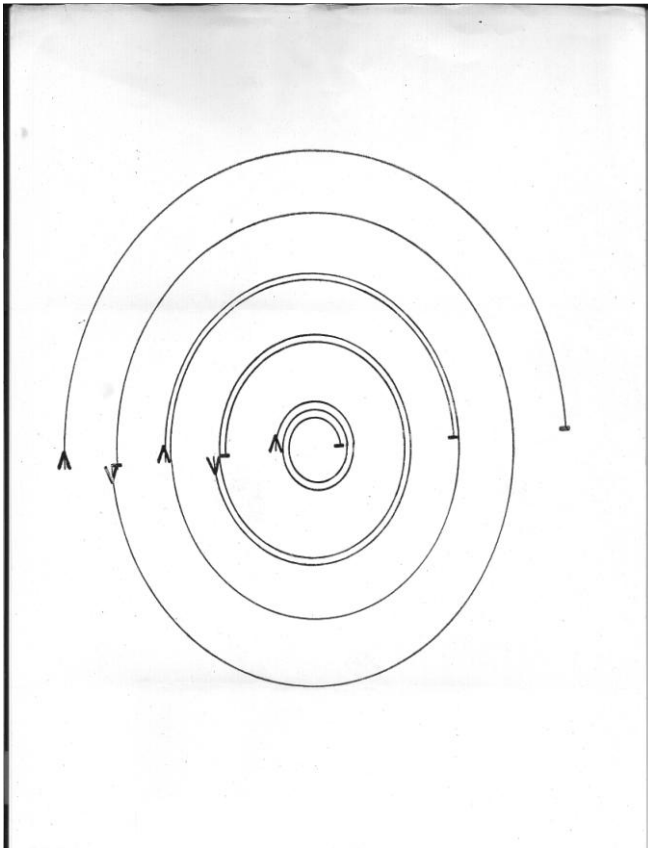
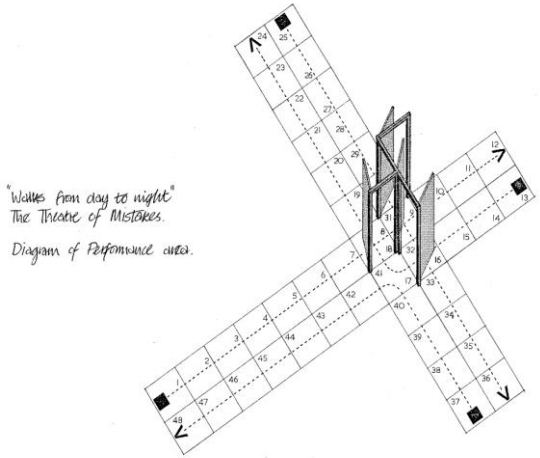
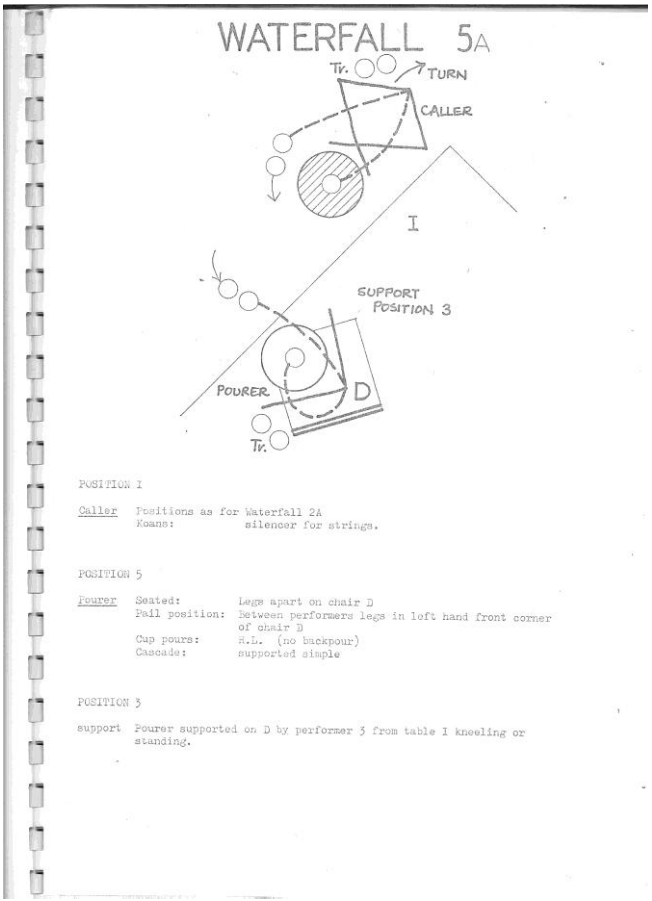


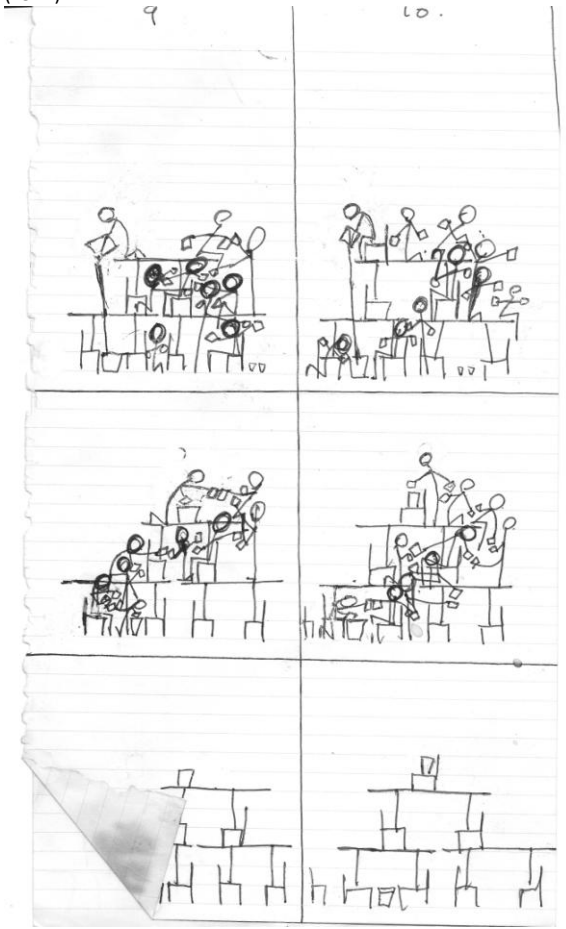
Diagram marking movement of performers in *Active Circles* (1975/6)
The Theatre of Mistake Archive





Page from *Waterfall* comb-bound book, 1977
©The Theatre of Mistakes

From the notebooks of Anthony Howell, notation of *Waterfall* (1977)



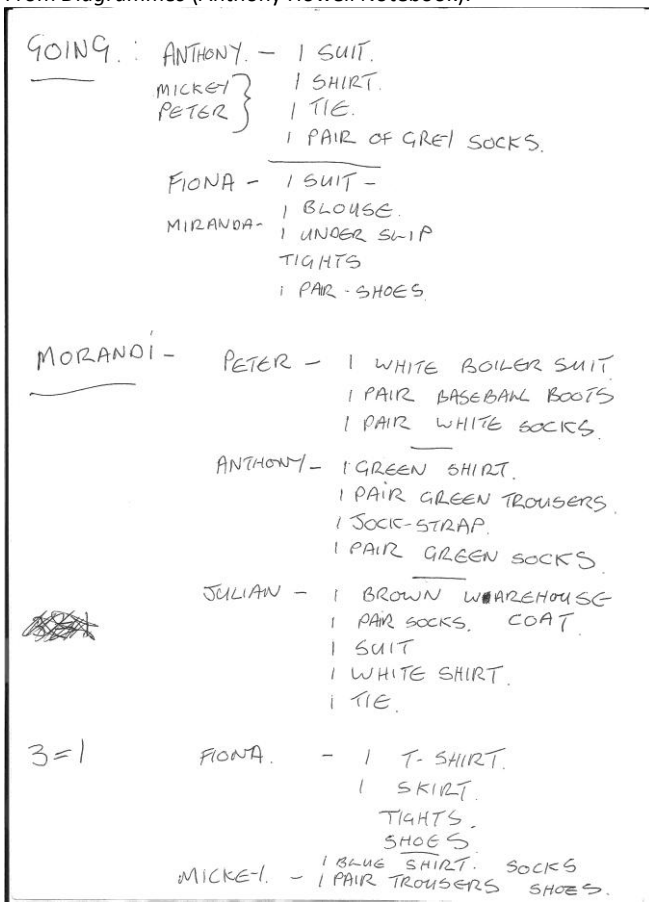
Nostalgia

See also: Memory, Mistakes

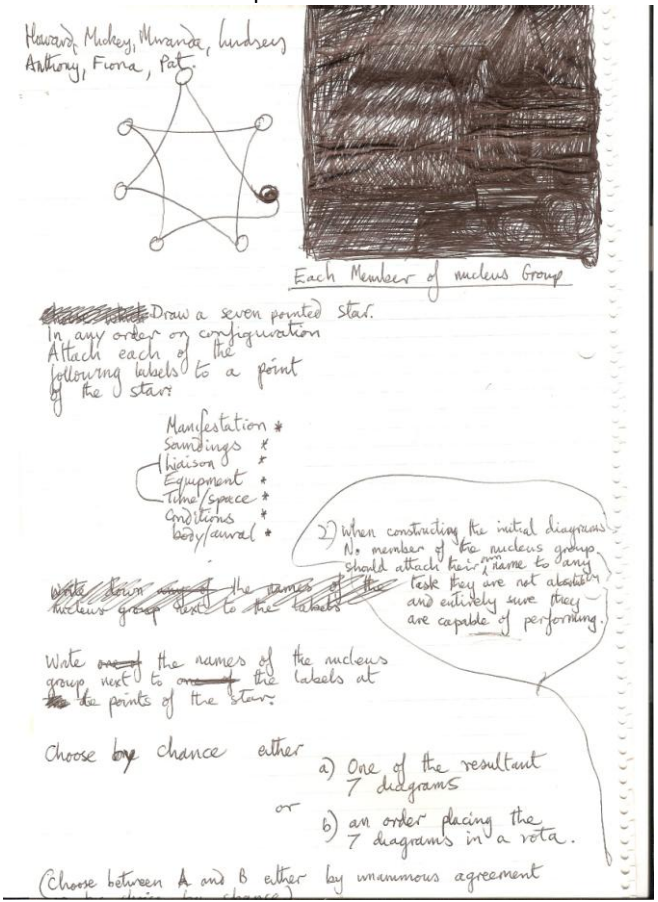
Memories may be nostalgic because they involve the act of not just evoking an experience but of re-inhabiting of it. This re-living of the past - and all its (dis)contents – entails, in phenomenological terms, accepting the notion of absence. Rather than remembering the act, the person, the object, we remember *how* we perceived the act, the person, the object. Hence in remembering a performance by The Theatre of Mistakes, a participant will continue to recall what they could see from the position they occupied (how they saw it) at the time. This is borne out by interviewees questioned by Jason E Bowman and myself for research: in describing the earlier works (pre-*Going*), participants noted there were whole sections they knew were occurring but could not physically see and hence did not attempt to convey, focusing instead on audience reaction or their own actions or those of someone in their line of vision. The role of nostalgia in this process could be said to be closely allied to the role of the mistake since the act of remembering even one's own perception may be coloured by projection. Suddenly the moment is no longer as it was perceived; it has become complicated by desire and recreation, be this the benefit of hindsight, a change in attitude, a wish to revive the past to suit the narrative of the present or the hopes for the future. Nostalgia, rose-tinted glasses, a romanticised view, a re-writing… whilst riddled with mistakes, this story is actually a leap into the imaginary.

Notes See also Orange.

From *Diagrammes* (Anthony Howell Notebook):



Nucleus See Core Group



Page from the notebooks of Anthony Howell, c.1975
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Nyman, Michael (1944-)
Composer, musicologist, and video artist credited with coining the term Minimalist in relation to music (1968). His compositions include chamber works and operas (*The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat,*), scores for film makers Peter Greenaway (*The Draughtsman's Contract, Drowning by Numbers,* and so on) and Jane Campion (*The Piano*). Friend of Anthony Howell who appears in the list of performers and artists in the *Elements* book.

See Additive, Music, Unattributed

Omissions
There are bound to be some unintentional omissions. Certain photographers for instance have not been identified. Apologies. This text is intended and extended as an invitation to dialogue and such omissions can be rectified in subsequent versions. However, there are also intentional omissions. This is perhaps the inevitable dilemma of gossip. (See Unattributed)

One Rule Game
A proposal for a work by Anthony Howell, Andrew Eden, [composer] John White, [dancer] Fergus Early; June/July 1974, Hampstead Heath.

"One rule game is an art event organized by a 4 person team. It is specifically designed for performance in public recreation spaces such as parks in urban areas. At the same time it can be played in the streets or indoors.

The game lasts for four weeks and is recommended for the summer months although no weather conditions are particularly averse to its nature.

The game is played from approximately 10am to 7pm each day, during which time at least one of the instigating team will be present in the chosen public arena.

The game can involve any number of participants with no previous experience of art activity.

It can be taught in a matter of minutes and will prove particularly useful to art teachers in depressed areas as well as to social workers and educationalists dealing with the handicapped and the elderly.

The game relies on a bare minimum of props. [……]

The Team

1 writer
1 visual artist
1 musician/composer
1 dancer

1 writer: To create instant poem systems, megaphone poem pieces, poster poems, minimal drama dialogue, sound poems and oratorios. The writer chosen will have the ability to impart his ideas both to the gathered participants and to the fellow artists on his team with the minimum fuss and bother [….]

1 visual artist: To create and present art objects, concepts and actions drawn from materials at hand and from ideas generated by the landscape in which the game is played. […]

1 Musician/composer: Will be able to stimulate an awareness of the sounds already present in the surroundings, compose instant music in conjunction with participants relying on little if any musical experience among them and depending for auditory effect more on the noises a human being may create without tools than on the virtuosity of expensive instruments – hand clapping, shouting, armpit music etc. will also be able to create music systems in conjunction with professional musicians he may feel obliged to call upon for concerts without lay participation

Participants
May be drawn from all walks of life […]

EG of rule –

Linked couples. One of the pair must walk backwards at any time."

Orange Notebooks

There are many orange notebooks containing copious writings by Anthony Howell. Fiona Templeton remembers these…. Their contents have not been scanned for The Theatre of Mistakes Archive.

Orpheus and Hermes

See also: *Lost Farm*; Muse; Miranda Payne; Julian Maynard Smith

"She had become all root"
(Rainer Maria Rilke's version *Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes*)

In Greek mythology, Orpheus (son of Apollo) is the 'father' of songs though. When his wife Eurydice dies his grief is so intense that he resolves to go to the underworld to bring her back. Hades finally agrees to his entreaties on the condition that Orpheus does

not look back as he leaves. When Orpheus cannot resist, it is Hermes, the messenger god, who must take Eurydice back to the underworld forever.

Both Peter Stickland and Anthony McCall have suggested that part of Anthony Howell's motivation for writing *Orpheus and Hermes* was the attitude of theatre critics some of whom – even when complimentary about The Theatre of Mistakes' work – implied that this was a company in search not so much of an author, but of a script.

(Written in 1981, the following review in *The Times* refers to *Going* and *Homage to Morandi*. It manages to miss the point spectacularly:

> But, though appealing, it feels sterile; the content is over-extended, and the form is too great a part of it. This dedicated company is still groping for the text, combining complexity, austerity and theatrical resonance, which will enable it to say what it can say and nobody else can.

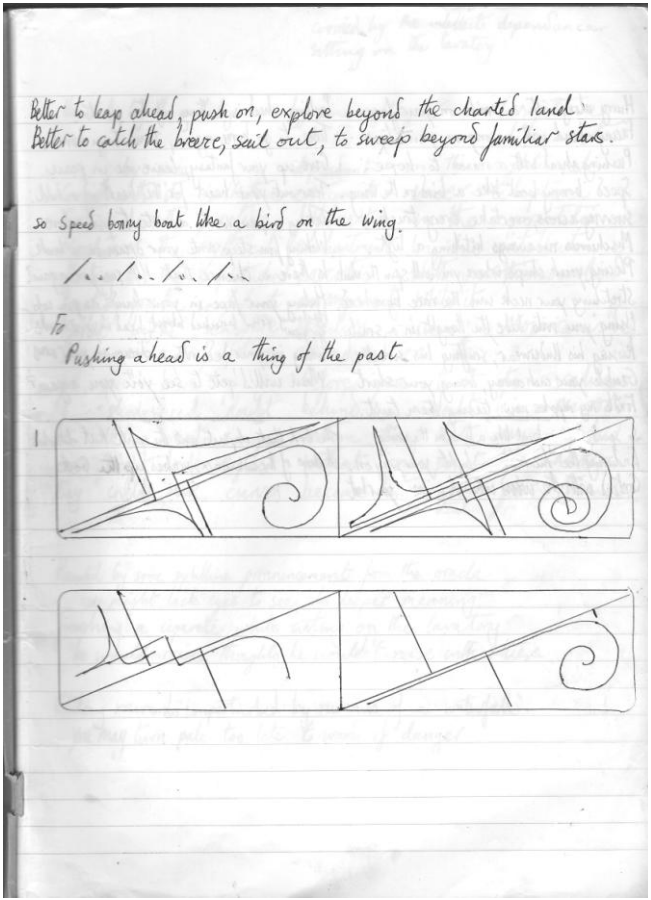
"Dedicated Company in quest of a text: The Theatre of Mistakes at Jeanetta Cochrane" see Bibliography)

Howell delivered a script. A clever, poetic, dense script. An actors' script. The Mickery in Amsterdam, a venue which had previously shown *Going* was not convinced.

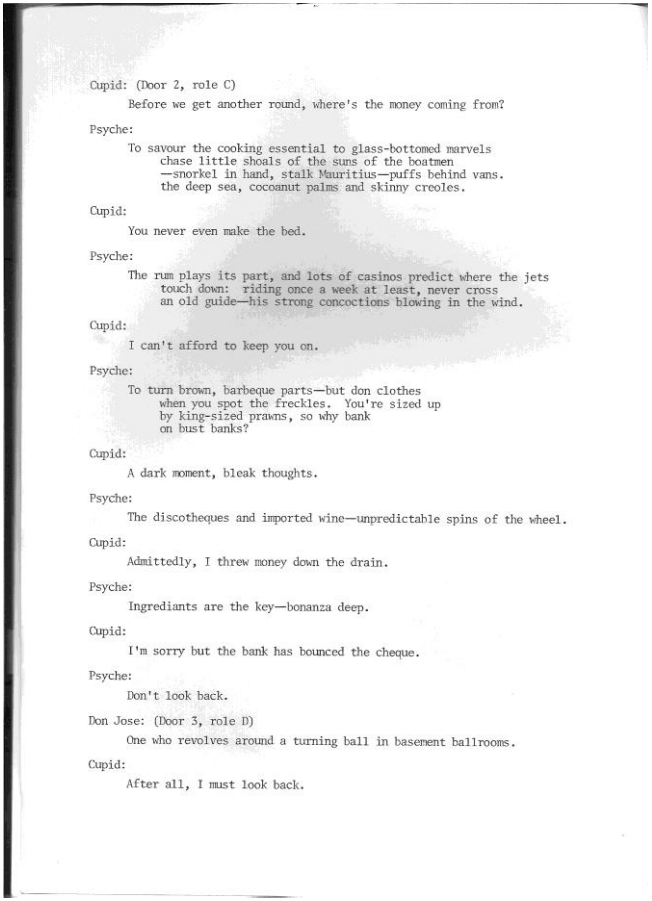
Another inspiration was Howell's complex romantic life and in the figures of Orpheus and Hermes, in the notion of being caught between looking forward and looking back, perhaps he rehearsed his indecision.

P.S.

An observer (unattributed) recalls Anthony Howell donning a fur stole and a pair of high-heeled shoes in a bid to show Miranda Payne how to perform her lines 'properly'…



Page from Anthony Howell's notebook with text from *Orpheus and Hermes*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Cupid: (Door 2, role C)
Before we get another round, where's the money coming from?

Psyche:
To savour the cooking essential to glass-bottomed marvels
chase little shoals of the suns of the boatmen
—snorkel in hand, stalk Mauritius—puffs behind vans.
the deep sea, cocoanut palms and skinny creoles.

Cupid:
You never even make the bed.

Psyche:
The rum plays its part, and lots of casinos predict where the jets
touch down: riding once a week at least, never cross
an old guide—his strong concoctions blowing in the wind.

Cupid:
I can't afford to keep you on.

Psyche:
To turn brown, barbeque parts—but don clothes
when you spot the freckles. You're sized up
by king-sized prawns, so why bank
on bust banks?

Cupid:
A dark moment, bleak thoughts.

Psyche:
The discotheques and imported wine—unpredictable spins of the wheel.

Cupid:
Admittedly, I threw money down the drain.

Psyche:
Ingrediants are the key—bonanza deep.

Cupid:
I'm sorry but the bank has bounced the cheque.

Psyche:
Don't look back.

Don Jose: (Door 3, role D)
One who revolves around a turning ball in basement ballrooms.

Cupid:
After all, I must look back.

Orpheus and Hermes ©Anthony Howell
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

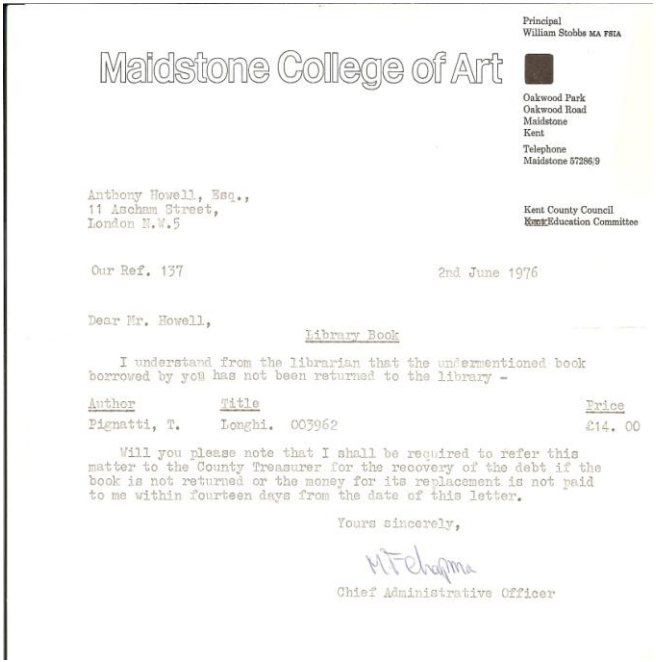
Ostracism

There was a game, Fiona Templeton recalls. One person was chosen by chance to be ostracised and would have to try to get the other performers to recognise their existence. If a person recognised the ostracised, they too became ostracised. The game continued until all but one performer is ostracised….

> But throughout the piece there is a conflict between freedom and adherence to rules. For the first performer in any act exists only as a memory for subsequent performers: intent on repeating the earlier actions of that initial performer, they attempt to ignore the instigator's present existence, only observing him or her in order to repeat that performer's actions later. Should any recognise that instigator's existence in the present, because of some breakdown in their observation or repetition of the actions set up, they are in turn ignored by all the other performers. But now, having broken the rules

Program Notes: The Theatre of Mistakes *Scenes at a Table, Homage to Pietro Longhi* (September 1976), The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Overdue



Principal
William Stobbs MA FSIA

Maidstone College of Art

Oakwood Park
Oakwood Road
Maidstone
Kent

Telephone
Maidstone 57286/9

Anthony Howell, Esq.,
11 Ascham Street,
London N.W.5

Kent County Council
~~Kent~~ Education Committee

Our Ref. 137

2nd June 1976

Dear Mr. Howell,

Library Book

I understand from the librarian that the undermentioned book borrowed by you has not been returned to the library -

Author	Title	Price
Pignatti, T.	Longhi. 003962	£14. 00

Will you please note that I shall be required to refer this matter to the County Treasurer for the recovery of the debt if the book is not returned or the money for its replacement is not paid to me within fourteen days from the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

M F Chapman

Chief Administrative Officer

Letter from Maidstone College Library to Anthony Howell, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

See also: Art Schools, *Homage to Pietro Longhi*

Also overdue is a retrospective of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes and a reassessment of its contribution to British performance/ conceptual art practice.

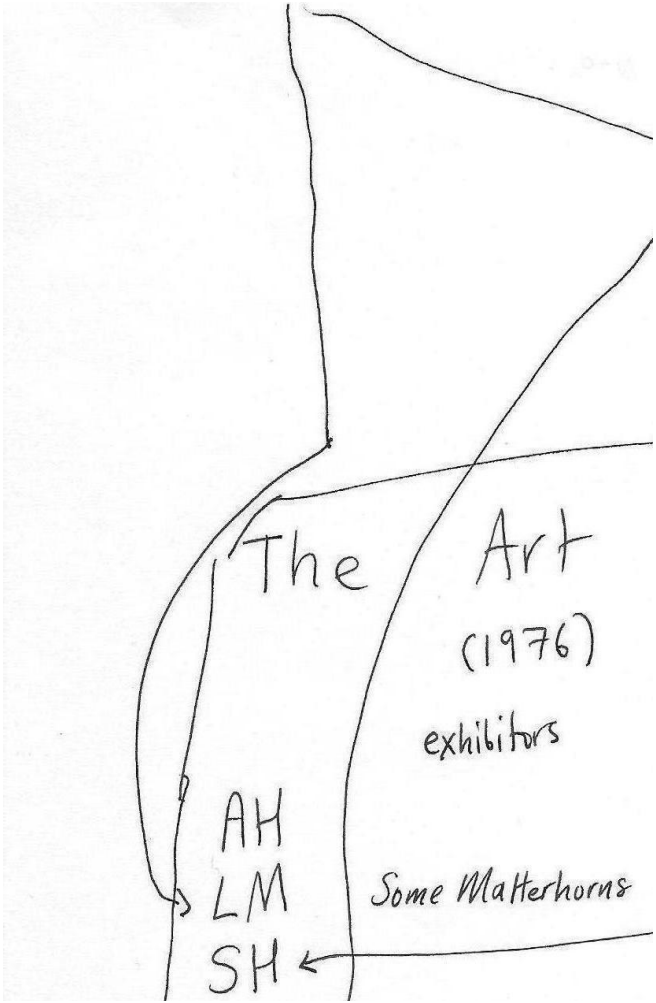
Owen, Mike

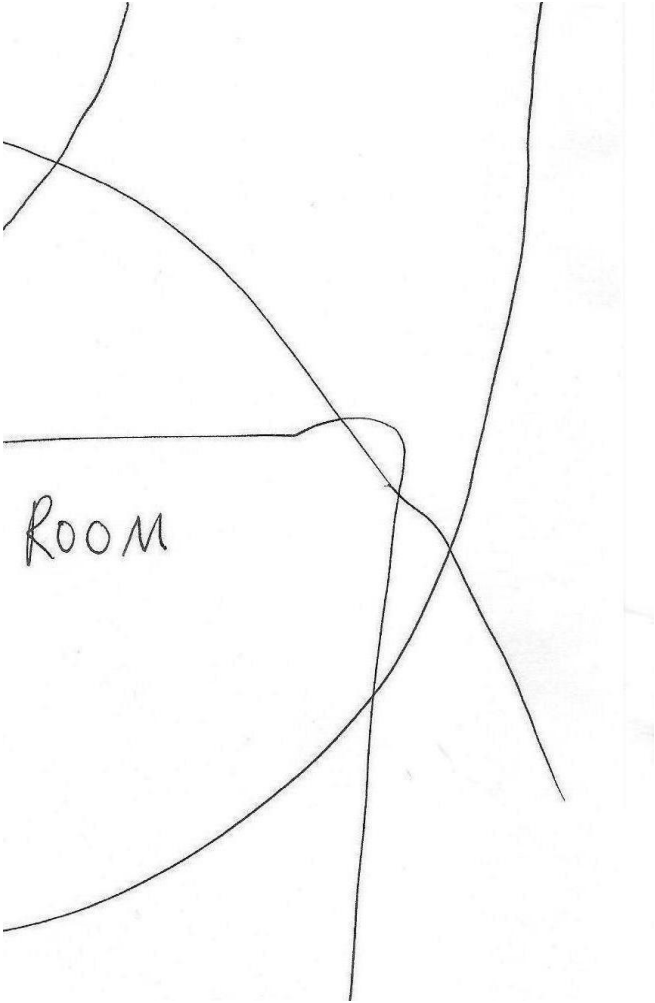
Friend of Howard Tong. Despite being involved in several performances (see *Five Concert Pieces,* Purdies, *The Street*) and being photographed in Howard Tong's flying suit for the insert for promotional posters for The Theatre of Mistakes, Owen was not part of the Core group of 1975.

Group Fantasy Piece Photo:©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Core Group Fantasy Piece, Summer 1975:
Fantasy for Mike Owen


The Art
(1976)
exhibitors
AH
LM
SH
Some Matterhorns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2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
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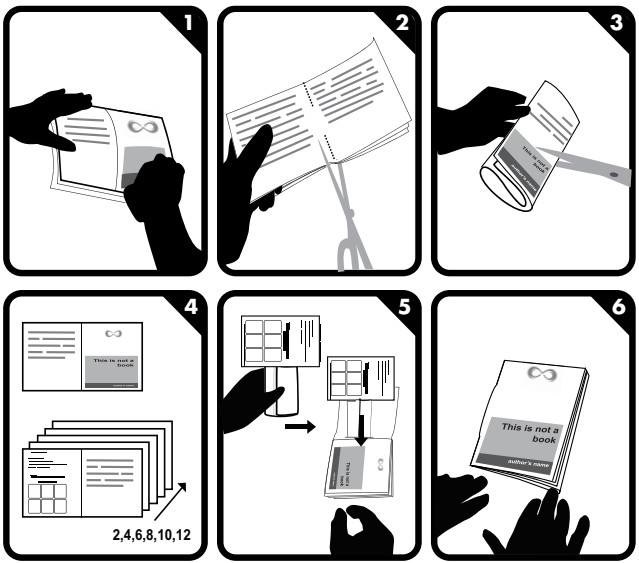


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – P

Marie-Anne Mancio

Pairs Game

Participation

Payne, Miranda

Performance Art

Performers

Photographers

Poetry

Preparations for Displacement

Punk

Purdies Farm

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

P

Marie-Anne Mancio

Pairs Game (July, 1975, May 1976)
See Miranda Payne

THE TING: THEATRE OF MISTAKES

PAIRS GAME

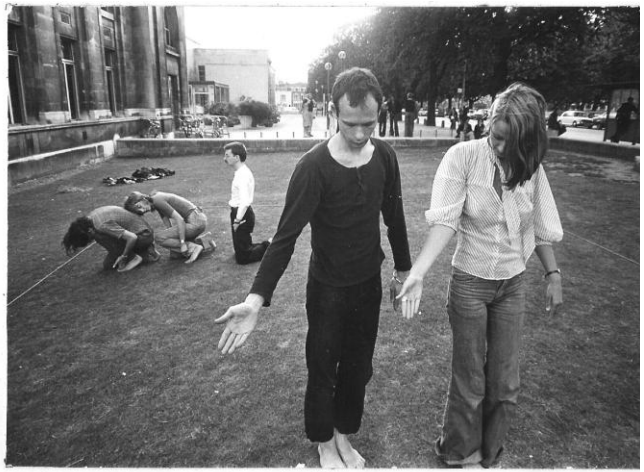
Pairs' Game is a performance piece which The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes first started working on in May 1975, concentrating on actions in and around a single square. Since then the outer square and instructions governing actions in the outer square have been added, and certain objects have been chosen to contribute to the piece in in a sculptural way.

Two concerns occupy the performers throughout the piece: the reflection of another's actions, the attempt to perform the opposite of another's actions. These preoccupations have inspired the instructions for both Aural and Body actions. In certain cases it is also possible to duplicate one's own actions and to perform the opposite of one's own actions. Opposites and reflections governed the choice of objects employed in the piece.

Pairs' Game is an example of constant growth in performance art. At each rehearsal —and even during the present performance—fresh instructions are discussed and new strategies decided upon. The piece can expand or contract in size depending on the number of performers involved and the amount of space available. New performers from any discipline can be incorporated into the piece. The performance can be mounted, starting from scratch, in four rehearsals.

As with any game, instructions are learnt and rules elaborated, but no particular actions are choreographed. Unlike any game, there is no method of winning. The performers may play for and against themselves and for and against each other, each may decide on methods of collaboration or methods of sabotage. Mostly, they perform for the sake of the performance.

Like any great painting, Pairs' Game exists in its own terms. Teams playing cricket "play the game" for themselves, yet a good game can attract a good audience. Each watcher of a game of cricket watches in their own terms, some for the result, some for a deckchair in the sun, a pint of lager and white figures strolling across a green. It is the hope of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes that art performances will become as common a sight on any space, and as common an activity, as any of our national sports. The company is intent on discovering methods that will lead to such a proliferation of performance art activity.



Southhampton Performance Show, July 1975
Rehearsal: PAIRS GAME.

Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

"At moments like a sport and at moments like a complex or beautiful dance, the piece moves the performers in and out of partnership until the rules catch them in the frozen positions of endgame."
(Notes by The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)

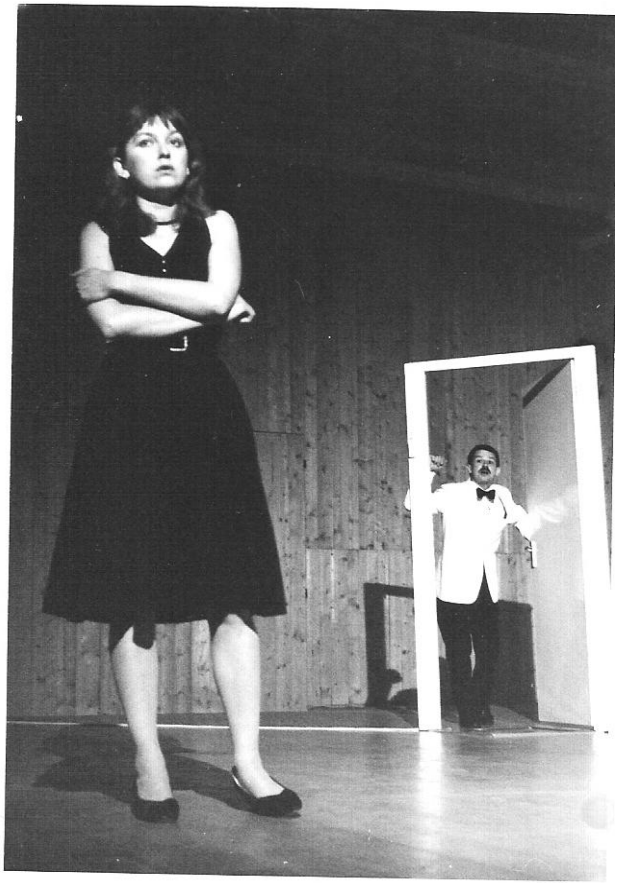
Pairs Game was performed at Maidstone art college and at the performance festival in Southampton.



Documentation of *Pairs Game* Photo:©The Theatre of Mistakes
Courtesy of Fiona Templeton

Participation
See: Audiences, Instructions

Payne, Miranda (1954-)
By her own admission, Miranda Payne was something of an enigma. She drifted in and out of Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes from its inception, yet her contribution to its conceptual development was always recognised by Anthony Howell for whom she became something of a muse and she was considered a member of the Core group in 1975.



I
Payne in *Orpheus and Hermes*
Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

MIRANDA PAYNE

Born 1954. Worked with the Bird in Hand Theatre Company on two plays performed at the Hoxton Hall and at the Mercury Theatre. Studied at Maidstone College of Art. Performed with the Theatre of Mistakes in "Preparations for Displacement" (Cambridge Poetry Festival 1974), and "The Street" (Kentish Town 1974). Created "Pairs' Game", which was first performed by the company in 1974 at The Southampton Performance Show. Performed with the same company at The London Exhibition 1974, and "Pairs' Game" was performed at the Slade in 1975. I then worked on a production of "Rank"—a play about the Windsor Free Festival—in 1976: this was performed at the Roundhouse Downstairs and went on tour in Devon and Cornwall. I also performed in "A Waterfall" at the Hayward Gallery 1977.

Extract from Program notes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

She describes her Seventies' self as a "blank," as a space onto which others could project their fantasies.
(Conversation: London, October, 2008)

Peter Stickland recalls Miranda had an incredible ability to make herself disappear on stage;
(Conversation: Peter Stickland, November 2008)
Pat Murphy also recognises her impact (see Women).

Payne eventually left The Theatre of Mistakes to co-found Station House Opera with her then partner Julian Maynard Smith.
See also Art Schools, *Five Concert Pieces*, *Going*, *Lecture Performance*, *Pairs Game*, *Preparations for Displacement*, Purdies, *Waterfall*

Payne also designed the poster for *Orpheus and Hermes*:



Excerpt from letter from Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton to Croydon College, 20th June 1977. Courtesy Miranda Payne:

We recommend Miranda very strongly indeed. She has proved herself one of the wisest and most imaginative of the people who have worked with our performance art company. The success of the piece she created for us in June 1975 (PAIRS GAME) was the main reason for our being awarded our first grant from The Arts Council. She worked patiently and tirelessly through our first year of existence as a group, on visual art pieces as often as on performances, bringing a distinction to the conceptual side of our work and proving an adept performer. She was instrumental in setting the

Performance Art

Artists' use of performance has been well-documented from Futurist banquets, Dadaist protests, 1950s Happenings and so on. Yves Klein used nude female models as human paintbrushes; Vito Acconci endlessly masturbated underneath a gallery floor in *Seed Bed*; Valie Export sat in darkened cinemas, a hole in the crotch of her trousers; Marina and Ulay Ambramovich tethered themselves together; Gina Pane risked mutilation at the hands of her audience. The British scene in the 1960s was dominated by groups such as the The People Show, IOU, Forkbeard Fantasy, and Welfare State, Gilbert and George were *Underneath the Arches*, Bruce McLean was opposing Caro's notions of sculpture, Stuart Brisley and Genesis P.Orridge were shocking audiences.

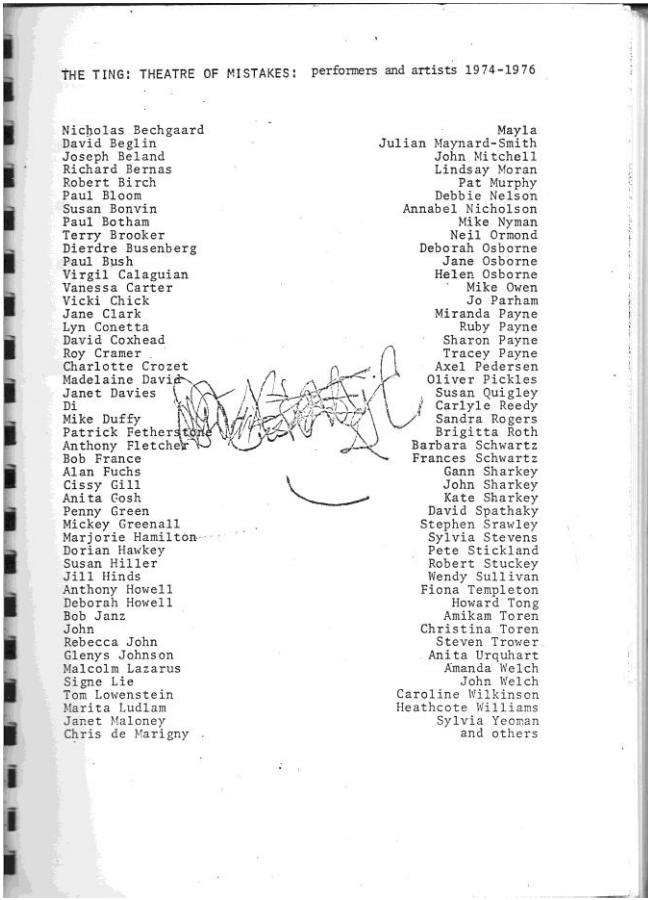
For an historical overview of performance art, see:
RosaLee Goldberg *Performance Art from Futurism to the Present*
Anthony Howell met with and assisted Goldberg when she was conducting research for this book in the UK.
(Conversations with Anthony Howell, London, Oct-Jan 2008-9)
For a history of British live art, see also:
Nick Kaye 'Live Art: Definition and Documentation' *Contemporary Theatre Review* 2(2), 1994: 1-7

For an introduction to live art resources, see:
www.thisisliveart.co.uk/resources/Study_Room/pubs_articles.shtml. The Live Art Development Agency, London has a study room open to visitors by appointment.

See also: Bibliography

Performers

See also: Core Group, Ting



THE TING: THEATRE OF MISTAKES: performers and artists 1974-1976

Nicholas Bechgaard
David Beglin
Joseph Beland
Richard Bernas
Robert Birch
Paul Bloom
Susan Bonvin
Paul Botham
Terry Brooker
Dierdre Busenberg
Paul Bush
Virgil Calaguian
Vanessa Carter
Vicki Chick
Jane Clark
Lyn Conetta
David Coxhead
Roy Cramer
Charlotte Crozet
Madelaine David
Janet Davies
Di
Mike Duffy
Patrick Fetherstone
Anthony Fletcher
Bob France
Alan Fuchs
Cissy Gill
Anita Gosh
Penny Green
Mickey Greenall
Marjorie Hamilton
Dorian Hawkey
Susan Hiller
Jill Hinds
Anthony Howell
Deborah Howell
Bob Janz
John
Rebecca John
Glenys Johnson
Malcolm Lazarus
Signe Lie
Tom Lowenstein
Marita Ludlam
Janet Maloney
Chris de Marigny

Mayla
Julian Maynard-Smith
John Mitchell
Lindsay Moran
Pat Murphy
Debbie Nelson
Annabel Nicholson
Mike Nyman
Neil Ormond
Deborah Osborne
Jane Osborne
Helen Osborne
Mike Owen
Jo Parham
Miranda Payne
Ruby Payne
Sharon Payne
Tracey Payne
Axel Pedersen
Oliver Pickles
Susan Quigley
Carlyle Reedy
Sandra Rogers
Brigitta Roth
Barbara Schwartz
Frances Schwartz
Gann Sharkey
John Sharkey
Kate Sharkey
David Spathaky
Stephen Srawley
Sylvia Stevens
Pete Stickland
Robert Stuckey
Wendy Sullivan
Fiona Templeton
Howard Tong
Amikam Toren
Christina Toren
Steven Trower
Anita Urquhart
Amanda Welch
John Welch
Caroline Wilkinson
Heathcote Williams
Sylvia Yeoman
and others

Page from Howell, Anthony & Templeton, Fiona *Elements of Performance Art* July, Ting books, 1976 listing all the performers

Photographers

See also: Archive, Documentation

Nicholas Bechgaard, Bob Van Dantzig, Niamh Ferguson, Geoff Howard, Robert Janz, Glenys Johnson, Anthony McCall, Andre Morain, Lindsay Moran, Mike Nelson, Brigitte Roth (from October 1975), Ray Smith (photographs of *Homage to Morandi*; Fine Art Fellow at Southampton University in 1978), Caroline Wilkinson, Kirk Winslow



Photo: ©Kirk Winslow *Going*



Photo: ©Nicholas Bechgaard *Preparations for Displacement*



Photo: ©Lindsay Moran *Going*

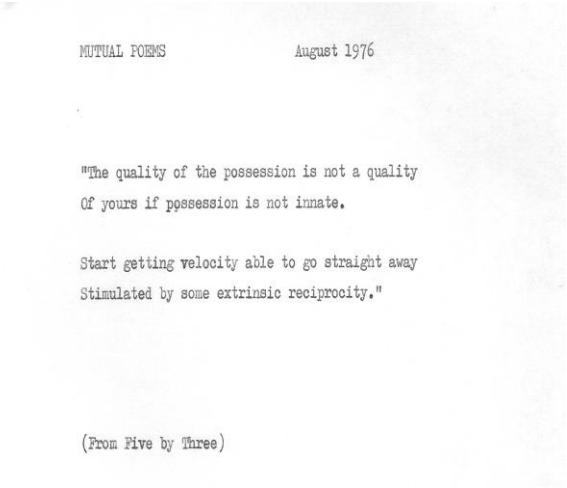


Photo: ©Andre Morain *Trio*

Poetry

Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton are both poets. Other poets involved with or in contact with Ting include David Coxhead, Tom Lowenstein, Carlyle Reedy, John Welch.
Andrew Eden recalls a poetry bookshop on Kensington Church Street frequented by Ting.

See also: Cambridge Poetry Festival and *Essora Tessorio* at the Whitechapel.



MUTUAL POEMS August 1976

"The quality of the possession is not a quality
Of yours if possession is not innate.

Start getting velocity able to go straight away
Stimulated by some extrinsic reciprocity."

(From Five by Three)

Mutual Poems – Fiona Templeton, Anthony Howell, Mickey Greenall, August 1976, Courtesy Fiona Templeton

Preparations for Displacement (Corn Exchange, Cambridge, Cambridge Poetry Festival, 19-21st April, 1975)
See also: Metronome, Amikam Toren, *The Street*

"Of the pieces I worked on, I liked the Cambridge piece because it represented the best of the early Ting – the freedoms possible within the structure and the beautiful nuanced differences between each of the two performances we did there. There was the sense of an organic reality with its own coherent logic, flexible enough to allow different things to happen. Having said that, I can't remember that much about it – the amazing thing is that no one can- beyond what they were doing and what was visible to them at the time. Structures were clear, what each performer was doing was clear, but there was so much choice around "how and when". I remember sitting absolutely still for a long time. Then doing "The Muybridge Solo" (this was a performance I did based on the still framed from the Muybridge series of the Man Getting Up from a Chair". At one point I moved to the centre of a circle and noticed that some audience member had joined in. Amazingly, they had taken on the slow motion, durational quality of the performance and fitted right in. Meanwhile Anthony [Howell] and Fiona Templeton read texts, Mickey Greenall partnered himself wearing his MAN/WOMAN costume. At certain points also, performers picked up the kodalith transparent masks I had made of each of us and moved through the vast space "being each other." I remember the relationship of stillness to movement, slow motion contrasted with sudden bursts of swift movement and everything intensifying towards a climax."

(Pat Murphy, response to Questionnaire, December 2008)



Preparations for Displacement Cambridge Poetry Festival, 1975
Photo:©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Punk

"A FULLY ARTICULATED SUBCULTURE, WITH A DISTINCTIVE VISUAL STYLE INVOLVING A BRICOLAGE OF ELEMENTS SUCH AS FETISH CLOTHING, TEDDY BOY GEAR, RIPPED AND TORN ITEMS AND, UNFORTUNATELY, NAZI UNIFORMS (THOUGH THESE WERE ESCHEWED FAIRLY EARLY ON). IT ALSO DEVELOPED, PARTLY THROUGH NECESSITY, A DISTINCTIVE GRAPHIC DESIGN STYLE, WHICH FOUND EXPRESSION IN RECORD SLEEVES, PUBLICITY AND IN 'ZINES', THE XEROXED AND COLLAGED PUBLICATIONS [.....] THE NEGATIVITY AND EVEN NIHILISM THAT PUNK EXPRESSED WAS IN DIRECT CONTRAST TO THE OPTIMISM OF THE COUNTERCULTURE [...] PUNK WAS AN AESTHETIC RESPONSE TO THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DISASTERS OF THE NINETEEN SEVENTIES. IT REFLECTED A WORLD OF INDUSTRIAL AND SOCIAL ANTAGONISM, URBAN DECAY AND HOPELESSNESS, NOT JUST THROUGH THE EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIFIC IMAGERY, BUT THROUGH THE VERY METHODS OF CUT-UP, MONTAGE AND APPROPRIATION IT EMPLOYED, WHICH VISUALLY ARTICULATED THE DISLOCATIONS IN THE COMING OF POST INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY."

(Charlie Gere "Punk and the Digital Aesthetic" paper *Moving the Image: Visual Culture and the New Millenium* CHArt Conference proceedings, Volume 3, 2001)

Curator and artist Jason E Bowman has suggested reading the history of The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes as a trajectory or transition from Minimalism to Punk.

Further reading:

Kerr, Joe; Gibson, Andrew and Seaborne, Mike (eds) *London from Punk to Blair*, Reaktion, 2003

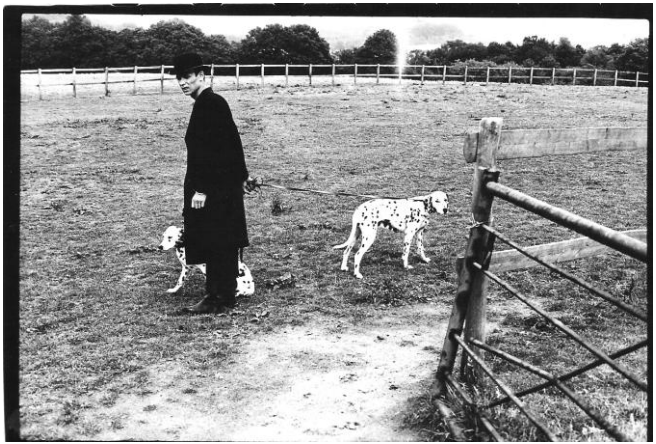


©Print by artist Jamie Reid



Purdies Farm See also: *Lost Farm*

Purdies – Hazeley Heath, Hartley Witney, Hampshire: a constant through the yearly histories of Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes. It represents intense periods of creativity, a site for the group to live and work together. In the early years, it is the venue for weekend events. Later, it's where works are honed prior to autumn touring.
Jacobean farmhouse; all the animals on the farm are female; Howard and Mickey sunbathe naked by a pool flecked with goose droppings; a hot summer of no rain and forests on fire; Anthony walks the Dalmatians; lying in hammocks strung beneath trees; there are performances in fields through the night to 2a.m., 4a.m.; *in the yard, horses are put through their paces*; rehearsals in the barn; exercises at dawn; **photographs of the effects of shadows on surfaces;** playing shove ha'penny in the local pub; waiting for Anita to finish getting ready; an impromptu set when furniture sits on the lawn waiting for removal; Glenys finds a dead mouse in the toaster; Miranda lives in a tent by the pool as she finds the house too claustrophobic; ***signing on;*** fences to mend, **trips to the cash and carry**; staying up late to do the budgets; **walking in huge circles on the local cricket pitch;** flared trousers so wide Peter catches his foot in them and breaks an ankle; Fiona wearing a man's suit in rehearsal; villagers calling them 'Tesco rejects' in an era when Tesco is a byword for scum; banned by The Cricketers Arms after *Active Circles* encourages rainfall.



Anthony Howell walks the Dalmatians at Purdies farm. Photo© The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

"There is a ghost story around the name. I remember Anthony telling the story – maybe something about lost children "perdus" being bricked up in the chimney. Anyway, this was a stud farm in Hampshire where Deborah Howell, Anthony's mother and a key performer in early Ting events, bred and broke in horses. There was a big farmhouse, a stable block and a big wooden barn with spaces between the slats of wood, so that the horse cantering in the field outside, would strobe past like a zoetrope or some early movie machine. There was also a swimming pool and a long drive. It was quite a way to the nearest village. I visited Purdie's three times in all and each visit was an event. First was a weekend when I went with Robert Janz and sat on a swinging bed in the barn while Anthony played a flute and the horses cantered outside. Then Deborah showed us a mare who was about to give birth. You could see the shape of the unborn foal on one side of the mare's belly. The second time I went was for the Dream Mapping weekend. I think Anthony collaborated with Susan Hiller on this. People were invited to sleep outside in a fairy ring (true) and to perform their dreams next day. The farm was heaving with people – artists, musicians, all kinds of London people. I guess it was like an early rave or new age traveler event. Anyway, I abandoned it and went to sleep at the end of the farm on a tree bed which Janz had built. There was a rainstorm in the middle of the night and I struggled across three muddy fields in the pitch black to get to the farmhouse, snapping lots of bits of string which caught at my neck on they way. I remember the following morning an irate sculptor appeared in the kitchen wanting to know who had sabotaged his string sculpture. This was in the summer of 74. The last time I visited would have been 1977 maybe. The group were preparing for a performance and Anthony invited Janz and myself to come and watch a rehearsal. At this stage, the group were very tight, focused and professional. Re the function of Purdie's: I can hardly say…the images are striking though. A working farm. A new age idyll and then a kind of intense, hard edged performance retreat." (Pat Murphy in response to Questionnaire, December 2008)

Photo© The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Greenall, Howell, Templeton, Payne, Urquarht, Moran, Tong at Purdies Farm, circa 1975

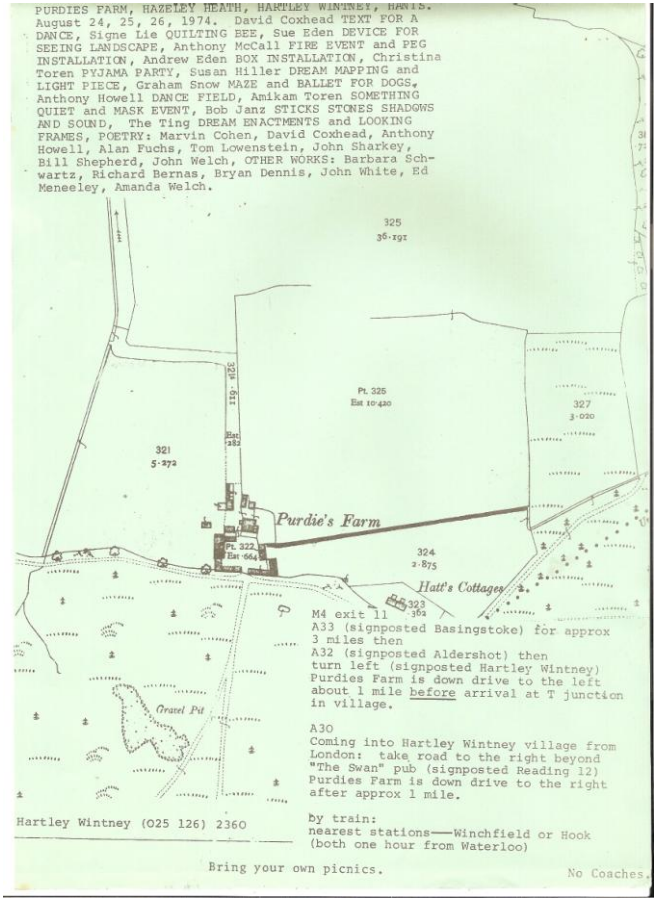
The Theatre of Mistakes rehearse at Purdies, nd, c Summer 1976
Photos: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



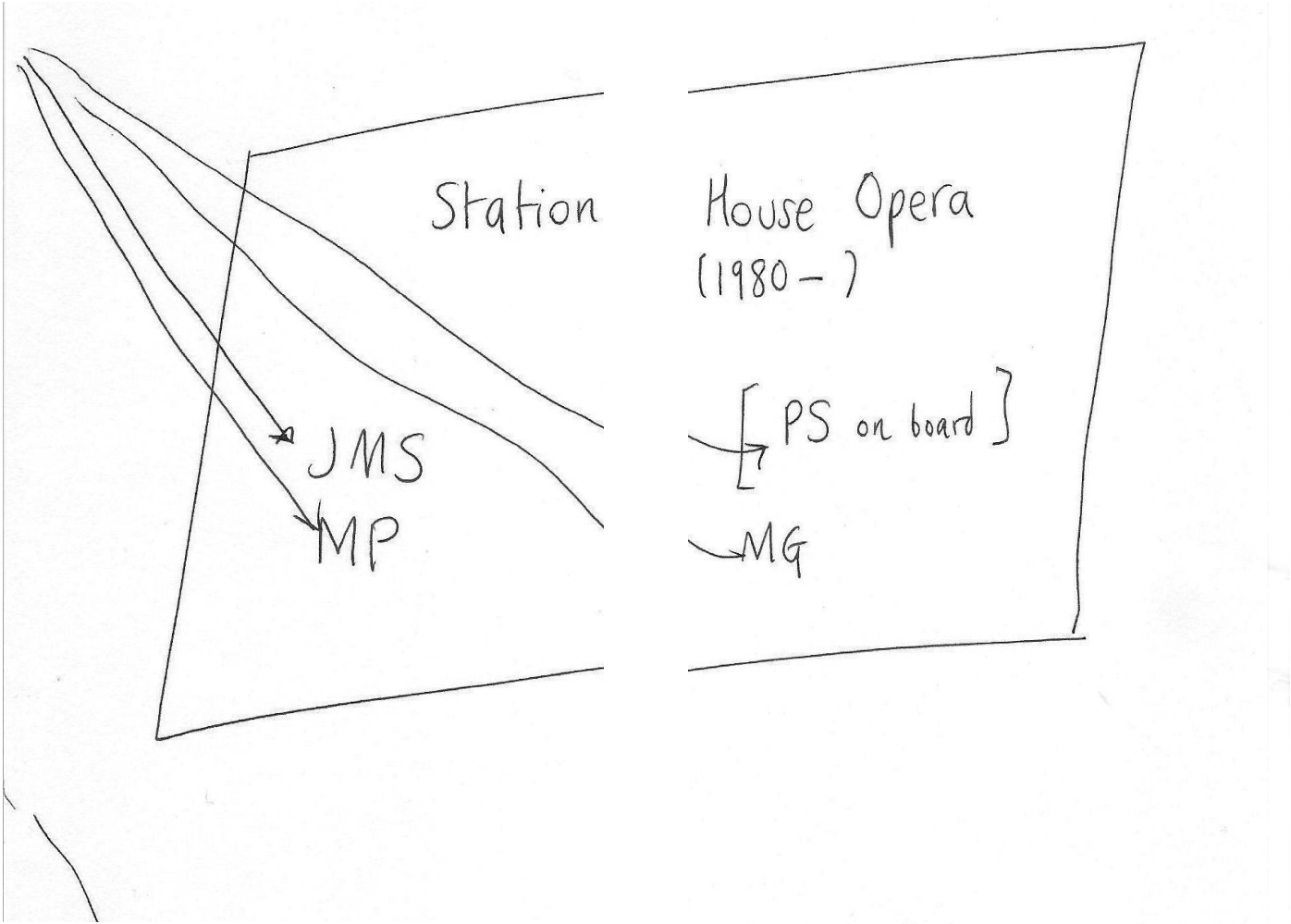
"[Purdies] was a very creative time. Intense. Really intense." (Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov 2008)



PURDIES FARM, HAZELEY HEATH, HARTLEY WINTNEY, HANTS.
August 24, 25, 26, 1974. David Coxhead TEXT FOR A DANCE, Signe Lie QUILTING BEE, Sue Eden DEVICE FOR SEEING LANDSCAPE, Anthony McCall FIRE EVENT and PEG INSTALLATION, Andrew Eden BOX INSTALLATION, Christina Toren PYJAMA PARTY, Susan Hiller DREAM MAPPING and LIGHT PIECE, Graham Snow MAZE and BALLET FOR DOGS, Anthony Howell DANCE FIELD, Amikam Toren SOMETHING QUIET and MASK EVENT, Bob Janz STICKS STONES SHADOWS AND SOUND, The Ting DREAM ENACTMENTS and LOOKING FRAMES, POETRY: Marvin Cohen, David Coxhead, Anthony Howell, Alan Fuchs, Tom Lowenstein, John Sharkey, Bill Shepherd, John Welch, OTHER WORKS: Barbara Schwartz, Richard Bernas, Bryan Dennis, John White, Ed Meneeley, Amanda Welch.



Flyer for Bank Holiday Weekend, August 1974 at Purdies. Andrew Eden recalls: "We were just talking, everybody was just moving from thing to thing." (Interview: Peterborough, 24th Nov, 2008)


Station
House Opera
(1980 –)
PS on board
JMS
MP
MG

2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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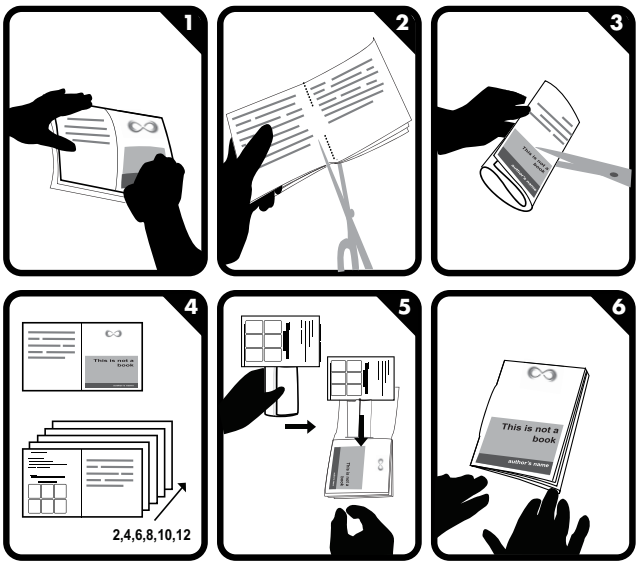


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – Q & R

Marie-Anne Mancio

Quarrels

Question (Writer's)
Question (Curator's)
Questionnaire

Quilting Bee
Quotidian

Rabbit
Rain Dance

Rape of the Mind

Reedy, Carlyle
Rehearsal

Reindeer Werk

Repetition
Research
Reversal

Reviews

Ritual

Robert Janz

Roles

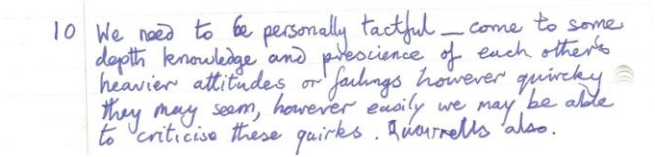
The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

Q-R

Marie-Anne Mancio

Quarrels


10 We need to be personally tactful — come to some depth knowledge and prescience of each other's heavier attitudes or failings however quirky they may seem, however easily we may be able to criticise these quirks. Quarrells also.

Notes from unpublished notebook of Anthony Howell, nd, C. 1974, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

All the interviewees have attested to the sometimes volatile nature of interactions within The Theatre of Mistakes that resulted in various periods of estrangement between members. Notwithstanding, the idea of opposition was incorporated into works.

Why an A-Z?

Question (Writer's):

The format of the *A-Z* allows for unexpected entries to be placed in proximity. (Any comedy value derived from this is not always unintentional).

Although habit implies reading should begin at *A*, there is no more reason to start there than at *XYZ*. In fact, for the reader in possession of the entire set, a variety of reading patterns might be suggested. For example:

for those seeking a basic introduction to Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes:

Begin with a contextualising Seventies, followed by the Introduction for curator Jason E Bowman's essay; Chronology, Core Group, then move on to the performances: *Preparations for Displacement, The Street, Homage to Pietro Longhi, Going, Rape of the Mind, Orpheus and Hermes,* and *Homage to Morandi,*

for those interested in the relationship to dance:

Ballet, Dance, Diagrams, Conceptualism, Seventies

Or one could begin with Chance, then throw 3 dice to dictate which book to read next (A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5, F-G=6, H=7, I-K=8, L=9, M=10, N-O=11, P=12, Q-R=13, S=14, T-U=15, V-Z=16) and 4 dice to determine the page number; and so on.

The decision to cross-reference across the 16 books often results in the replication of information: something reflected in The Theatre of Mistakes Archive. Before attempting to catalogue the latter, I consulted archivist Jan Booth (Archives and Records Manager, Kings College, London) who urged me to resist the academic propensity to order. I began instead to relish the fact the same diagram, for instance, appeared in several contexts (on the back of a program; as part of a funding application…) and to appreciate how my readings of it shifted accordingly. Suddenly links and overlaps become clearer, the depth of social and professional relationships revealed.

Contrary to perceptions of the *A-Z* as a closed set, the circuitous nature of this one means it is always open-ended, never complete. With its potentially irritating instruction to "See also:" each entry attempts to entice the reader to continue their search. Since further reading inevitably entails additional "See also"s (which may ask the reader to read on or even to return to their start point) it becomes apparent this is a narrative without conclusion. (See also: Gossip) This way of reading reflects the entangled nature of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes and the fact that some lacunae in the fabric can never be mended in the

absence of performer Michael Greenall. There is always at least one letter missing. The only entry under Y is you.
Sometimes questions posed in one letter begin to be answered in another (see Mistakes and Solution). And some questions – some whos, wheres, whats, whys - are not answered at all. Some entries (see Roles) are little more than photo essays which require the viewer to draw their own conclusions.

Question (Curator's):

Jason E Bowman -

"So how does the curator develop a methodology for decision-making with regard to an exhibition's content, particularly if the group has disbanded and the starting point is a collection of ephemera, documentation, and artworks?"

Questionnaire

How and when did you first hear of Ting and become involved with them?
Who do you think of as integral to The Theatre of Mistakes and could you describe their main contribution?
Group dynamics of Ting – who – if anyone – instigated what; what was the creative process; how were decisions taken; how did performances evolve?
How would you describe the nature of your involvement?
What do you see as the inception of Ting? Was it a session/conversation/performance?
And the end?
What was your background?
What was your prime contribution to Ting?
What do you think Ting contributed to your evolving practice?

More generally, how do you remember the cultural landscape of the Seventies? What other artists influenced you/ were you in proximity with/ witnessed your work?
How would you contextualise Ting in relation to conceptualism/post-Minimalism/systemic art/performance? Were you conscious of belonging at any point?
How did economic considerations impact (on the aesthetic of the work/ on your decision to join/leave?)
Were you involved in the documentation process? If so, did you see it as relevant?
Purdies Farm – describe it. What do you associate with it? Describe a typical day there. What performances do you remember seeing there? What was its function for you?
Role of women in the collective – in retrospect was there any differentiation?
To what extent did personal relationships inform the work?
Of the Roles, which did you enjoy?
Which works impacted on you particularly as a performer/observer?
How was Ting perceived by its audiences and who were they?
What levels and forms/models of participation could you identify?
The mistake: what do you perceive to be the function of the mistake?
What were the limitations or failures of Ting?
In retrospect, what was its legacy in art historical terms?

The above questionnaire was devised by Jason E Bowman and Marie-Anne Mancio as a basis for questioning participants and observers of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes in conversations. (2008-ongoing). However, interviewees were encouraged to reconfigure and digress. See: Gossip.

Quilting Bee (1974)

Signe Lie Howell initiated this artwork at a weekend of events at Purdies farm. In "Up, Down, and Across: A New Frame for Quilts," (in *The Artist and the Quilt*. Ed. Charlotte Robinson. New York: Knopf, 1983, 32-43) Lucy R. Lippard writes:

"Since the new wave of feminist art began around 1970, the quilt has become the prime visual metaphor for women's lives, for women's culture"; a "quilt is a diary of touch" betraying "uniformity and disjunction", "the diversity within monotony of women's routines" (32)

Notwithstanding the American bias of Lippard's analysis, she is correct to note the quilt has multiple centres of interest. *Cf* Grids

"I did a few squares. I'm terrible with a needle."
(Interview: Victoria Chick, London, 4th Nov 2008)

Signe Howell remembers having to urge everyone to finish it but that she grew tired of it in the end.
(Conversations: Oslo, 13th-14th October 2008)

Amikam Toren recalls *Quilting Bee* differently, saying he walked into a silent room and the women in there all looked up from their quilt making. "That's who she means by everyone," he says, drily. "All the women." And he felt himself unwelcome.
(Conversations: London, November 2008)





Quilting Bee Signe Lie [Howell] Photos: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



The quilt was not 'completed' – though perhaps completion was never the point - but has been perfectly preserved and is in the possession of Prof. Signe Lie Howell, Oslo. The above polaroids, dating to 1974, do not do its colour justice.

Quotidian

Anthony Howell has compared *Waterfall* to the paintings of Vermeer where the simplest gesture of a woman holding a pitcher of milk becomes transformed.



Vermeer *The Maid Servant* c.1658

The quotidian is also apparent in The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes' use of movement which did not require trained dancers but drew instead on everyday movements; text – with the exception of *Orpheus and Hermes*; the 'costumes' and 'props'.

Rabbit (random memory courtesy of Fiona Templeton)

Anthony Howell dressed as a silver rabbit.

Rain Dance

See *Active Circles,* Englishness

The News, September 1976

Bizarre dance brings rain —as forecast!

RAIN fell just 12 hours after the end of a bizarre "rain dance" on a village green.

Members of the Ting Theatre of Mistakes, a modern art company, carried out an eight-hour dance marathon at Hartley Wintney to bring rain.

Although a spokesman for the group said he was not too certain of success the next morning rain fell on the tinder dry countryside.

The company, which performs all over the country at festivals and art galleries, carried out the marathon dance as part of normal rehearsals.

Group spokesman Pete Stickland told the "News": "Some people may think we're odd. They don't understand it.

"We put together movements similar to those performed by Druids in the early times. Many people come to watch us."

Mr. Stickland said that last Thursday's rain dance was a "one-off thing" in a bid to end the drought.

The group of four men and three girls aged between 24 and 30 live at a farm at Hazeley Heath.

SURPRISES

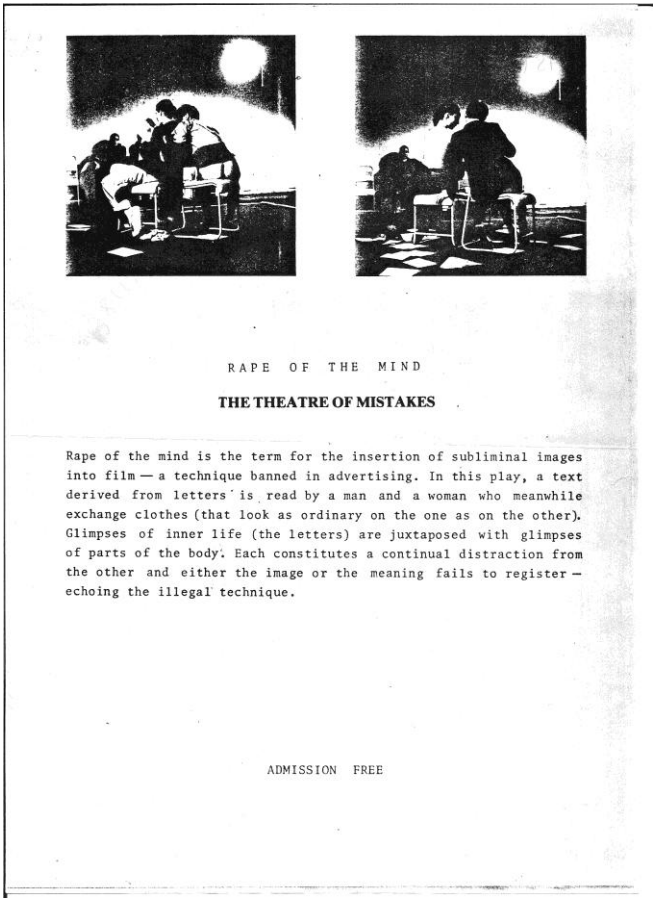
There, another member of the group said last Friday: "We're nicely surprised with the rain, but will have to wait and see just how long it lasts. We are all very pleased with our eight hours' work."

At the met office at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, a spokesman said: "Friday's rain was quite expected. It was on the cards and we had it in sight for a long time."

Rape of the Mind (1978)
The Rape of the Mind: The Psychology of Thought Control, Menticide and Brainwashing by Jooat A. M. Meerloo, MD, (an instructor in psychiatry at Columbia University) was last published in 1956 and explored concepts such as techniques of individual and mass submission – forced confessions, brainwashing, advertising, propaganda, fear etc. It cites U.S. Marine Colonel Frank H. Schwable who was captured by Chinese Communists during the Korean War. Schwable confessed under duress to participating in biological warfare. He later repudiated this, claiming: "The words were mine but the thoughts were theirs."



Fiona Templeton and Mickey Greenall perform *Rape of the Mind*
Nd ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



RAPE OF THE MIND

THE THEATRE OF MISTAKES

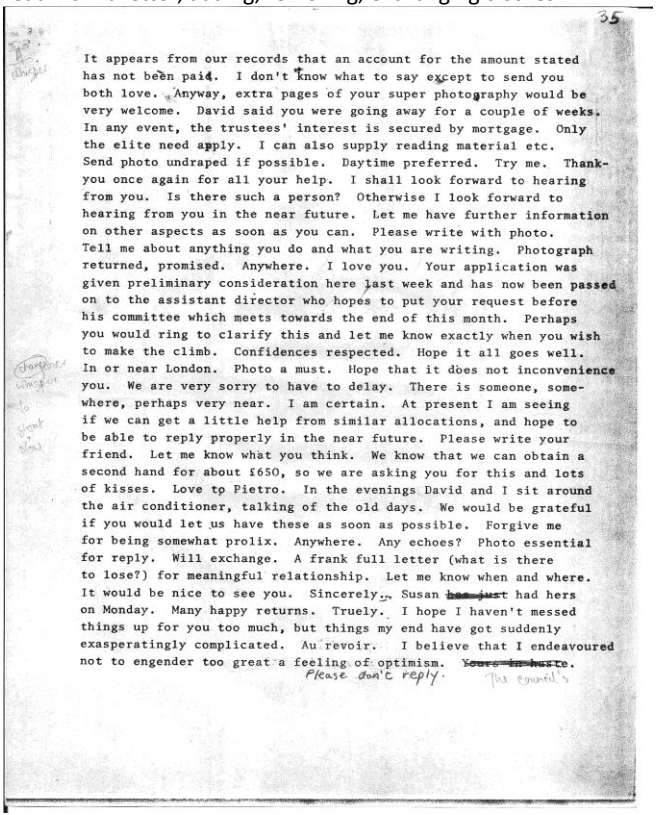
Rape of the mind is the term for the insertion of subliminal images into film — a technique banned in advertising. In this play, a text derived from letters is read by a man and a woman who meanwhile exchange clothes (that look as ordinary on the one as on the other). Glimpses of inner life (the letters) are juxtaposed with glimpses of parts of the body. Each constitutes a continual distraction from the other and either the image or the meaning fails to register — echoing the illegal technique.

ADMISSION FREE

Program, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

See also: Letters

The Theatre of Mistakes' *Rape of the Mind* deploys an additive and subtractive structure. A man and a woman seated at a table read from a letter, adding, removing, exchanging clothes.



35

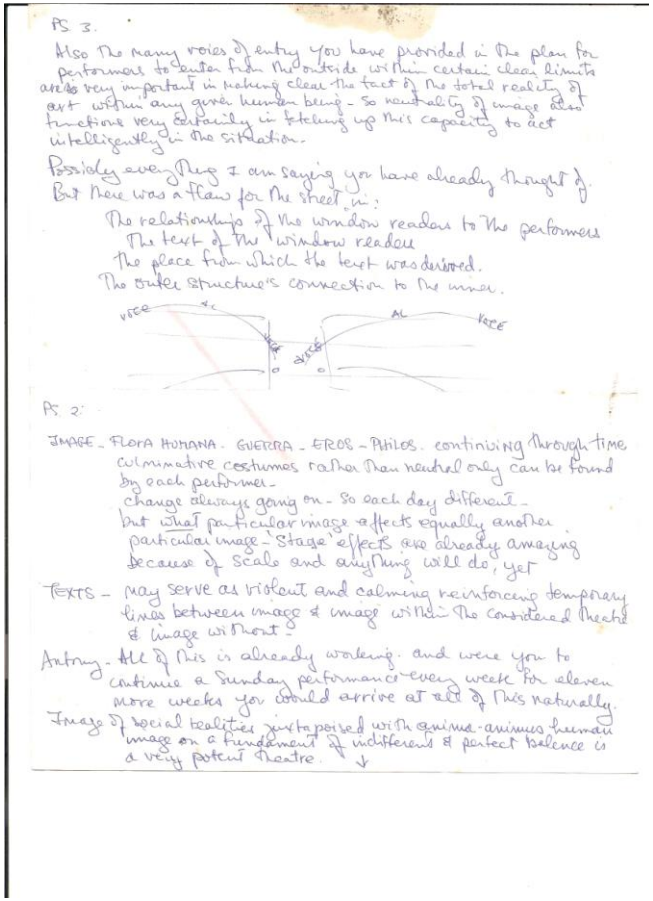
It appears from our records that an account for the amount stated has not been paid. I don't know what to say except to send you both love. Anyway, extra pages of your super photography would be very welcome. David said you were going away for a couple of weeks. In any event, the trustees' interest is secured by mortgage. Only the elite need apply. I can also supply reading material etc. Send photo undraped if possible. Daytime preferred. Try me. Thank-you once again for all your help. I shall look forward to hearing from you. Is there such a person? Otherwise I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. Let me have further information on other aspects as soon as you can. Please write with photo. Tell me about anything you do and what you are writing. Photograph returned, promised. Anywhere. I love you. Your application was given preliminary consideration here last week and has now been passed on to the assistant director who hopes to put your request before his committee which meets towards the end of this month. Perhaps you would ring to clarify this and let me know exactly when you wish to make the climb. Confidences respected. Hope it all goes well. In or near London. Photo a must. Hope that it does not inconvenience you. We are very sorry to have to delay. There is someone, some-where, perhaps very near. I am certain. At present I am seeing if we can get a little help from similar allocations, and hope to be able to reply properly in the near future. Please write your friend. Let me know what you think. We know that we can obtain a second hand for about £650, so we are asking you for this and lots of kisses. Love to Pietro. In the evenings David and I sit around the air conditioner, talking of the old days. We would be grateful if you would let us have these as soon as possible. Forgive me for being somewhat prolix. Anywhere. Any echoes? Photo essential for reply. Will exchange. A frank full letter (what is there to lose?) for meaningful relationship. Let me know when and where. It would be nice to see you. Sincerely,, Susan ~~has just~~ had hers on Monday. Many happy returns. Truely. I hope I haven't messed things up for you too much, but things my end have got suddenly exasperatingly complicated. Au revoir. I believe that I endeavoured not to engender too great a feeling of optimism. ~~Yours in haste~~.

Please don't reply.

Annotated extract from script ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive. It is probable that the 'Susan' and 'David' referred to are Susan Hiller and David Coxhead.

Reedy, Carlyle (1938-)

Notes after attending rehearsals of *The Street* (1975). Letter to Anthony Howell, 14th June 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



PS 3.

Also the many voices of entry you have provided in the plan for performers to enter from the outside within certain clear limits are very important in making clear the fact of the total reality of art within any given human being - so neutrality of image must function very certainly in picking up this capacity to act intelligently in the situation.

Possibly everything I am saying you have already thought of. But there was a flaw for the street in:

The relationships of the window readers to the performers
The text of the window readers
The place from which the text was derived.
The outer structure's connection to the inner.

PS 2:

IMAGE - FLORA HUMANA. GUERRA - EROS - PHILOS. continuing through time culminative costumes rather than neutral only can be found by each performer.
change always going on - so each day different -
but what particular image effects equally another particular image - Stage effects are already emerging because of scale and anything will do, yet

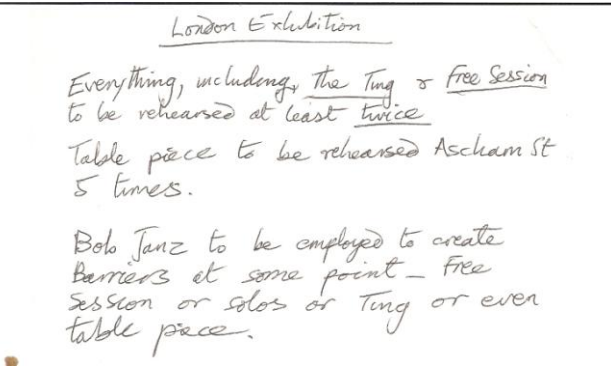
TEXTS - may serve as violent and calming reinforcing temporary lines between image & image within the considered theatre & image without.

Anthony - All of this is already working and were you to continue a Sunday performance every week for eleven more weeks you could arrive at all of this naturally

Image of social realities juxtaposed with anima-animus human image on a fundament of indifferent & perfect balance is a very potent theatre.

Reedy is an experimental poet and performance artist who moved to the UK from the U.S. in 1964 and was involved in an exhibition organised by Circles with Pat Murphy, Annabel Nicholson, Jane Clark, Susan Hiller.
See: London Film Makers Co-op, Poetry

Rehearsal


London Exhibition

Everything, including, the Ting & Free Session to be rehearsed at least twice

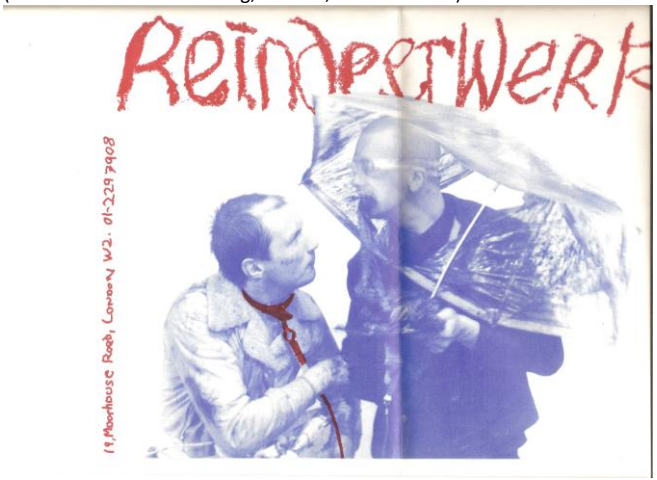
Table piece to be rehearsed Ascham St 5 times.

Bob Janz to be employed to create Barriers at some point – Free Session or solos or Ting or even table piece.

Extract from the notebooks of Anthony Howell, *nd,* The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

By *Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session* at the 1975 London Exhibition, The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes claimed "some of its projects are rehearsed for periods as long as a year."
Going was 'fully rehearsed' complete with mistakes.

Reindeer Werk (1972-80)
Performance art duo Thom Puckey and Dirk Larsen who performed at the Art Room; influenced Howard Tong. Puckey describes their work as "pure, non-theatre based performance art" (see www.thompuckey.com/index.php?/works/1973---1981-the-reindeer-werk-period for chronology and images)
Tong recalls a performance in which Genesis P.Orridge [see www.genesisp-orridge.com] wrapped himself in plastic and caught fire, only to be rescued by Reindeer Werk.
(Conversation: Howard Tong, London, October 2008)



Poster for Reindeerwerk, nd

Repetition
Described by Anthony Howell as "a primary element [in performance art] similar to a primary colour in painting (in that it cannot be created by a mixture of any other elements). In analysis repetition is associated with obsession."
(*The Analysis of Performance Art: A Guide to its Theory and Practice*, xiii, see Bibliography)

Research See: **Empirical**

Reversal
Occurs in many exercises and works. See *Three Act Piece* (Act 2 and Epilogue) where actions are reversed and speeded up.

REVERSAL June 1976 Ascham Street, London

At the time set for a performance to a local and invited audience, the performers reversed all their actions of the previous half hour.

Reviews See **Critics**

Ritual

See also: Susan Hiller, Signe Lie Howell, Anthony McCall



Performance at Purdies Farm, nd Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Snow drifts in with Nick. Quiet warm smiles. Gradual clearing of cluttered barn, arranging spaces and shadows. Mushrooms from forest are gathered. Altars, tapers, veils come into focus. Leisurly afternoons. "Come - let's get more ferns."

Expectation rises with the moon. Masks, moving sounds: flute, drumming, shimmering rythms on hubcap cymbols, steel barrel drums. By taper, a coalescense of ritual, reverberations of Noh. The priest dances with horned disciple. Long preparation for innitiation sacrifice. The innitiate is called forward, stripped, laid out, and OH FUCK poured over with sacred glue. Flesh is eaten in form of mushroom puffballs.

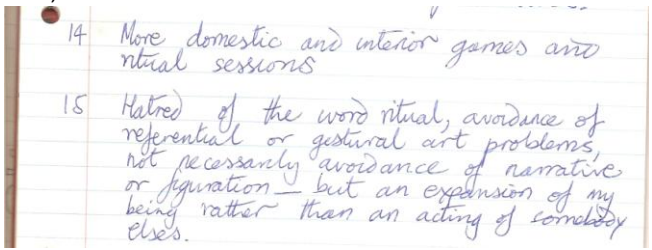
(Unpublished review labelled 'Janz', August 1974, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)

Victor Turner, who studied what was then Rhodesia's Ndembu tribe (1950-2; and again in 1953-4), defines ritual thus:

"a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects,[e.g. masks] performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests"
(V. Turner 'Symbols in African Ritual' in JLDolgin, DS Kemnitzer and DM Schneider (eds) *Symbolic Anthropology*: *A reader in the study of symbols and meanings*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, 183)

Turner alluded to the transformative power of rituals, wherein symbols (which comprised, for him, objects, activities, words, relationships, events, gestures, or spatial units) with a multiplicity of significances were manipulated in order to unite individuals within the social order or to fulfil psychological needs. Ritual then, as a form of social drama. Turner influenced Richard Schechner (see *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual* which Schechner edited along with Willa Appel, University of Cambridge, 1990), as did Allan Kaprow's *The Seven Qualities of Happenings* (1966). Schechner sees ritual as belonging with theatre, play, games, and sport. These activities are linked by – amongst other things - their attitude to time and their adherence to rules. He asserts:
"performing onstage, performing in special social situations (public ceremonies, for example), and performing in everyday life are a continuum"
(*Performance Studies: An Introduction*, Routledge 2002, 116).
cf Erving Goffmann *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1959.

The influence of ritual in performance art can be seen in Beuys' exploration of shamanism and his non-verbal actions; the exorcisms of Hermann Nitsch; Marina Abramovic's durational works, Ron Athey's mutilations, and so on. Evidence of an interest in ritual occurs in the early practice of The Theatre of Mistakes, particularly in activities around the Ting and Purdies farm (Susan Hiller's *Dream Mapping*). Anthony Howell compared listening to some systemic music (such as Reich's or Glass's) with primitive, ritualistic drumming for the sense of timelessness it induces. (See unpublished interview with Christopher Hobbs and john White, 1974, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)
However, as notes from Anthony Howell's unpublished notebook reveal, this interest in ritual was not unanimous or uncritical:



Later works such as *Going* also draw on ritual (in this instance, the rituals of leave-taking), but by now the group's performance language is so formalised that any notion of the mystical or dreamlike that may have been present in events at Purdies has disappeared, to be replaced by structure as the over-riding concern.

When questioned in the 1980s by performance artist Linda Montano about her own relationship to ritual with respect to death, Fiona Templeton wrote:
"Ritual has been automatic and gave answers that seemed to have no questions, or I still asked. Automatic form distracts from what it holds but that's what it's for. Americans are jealous to create rituals, so think about them more, make symbolism a task until ritual only symbolizes the need for tradition"
(*Performance Artists Talking in the Eighties*, University of California, 2000, 453).

Further reading: 'Performance Art and Ritual: Bodies in Performance' Erika Fischer-Lichte *Theatre Research International* 22(1) 1997:22-37.
And for a more general consideration of ritual: *On Ritual* Performance Research, no.3, Winter 1998

Robert Janz, See **Janz, Robert**

Roles

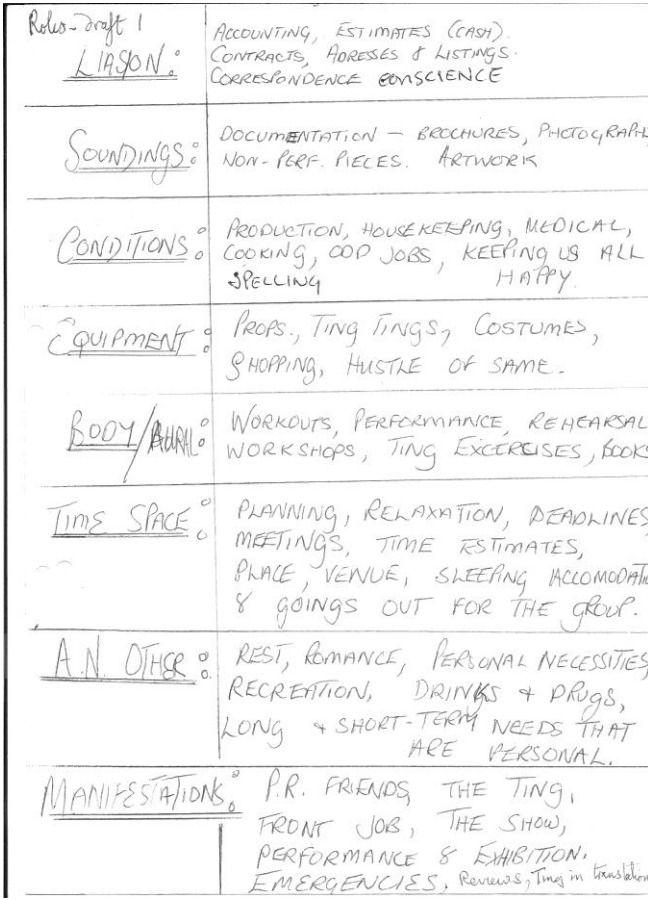
ROLES—Autumn 1975

Longer term (approx three months max or minimum of 7 shows which are self-contained and larger shows in that period):

Manifestation..Antony Howell.....
Soundings..Mickey Greenall..
Liaison Time & Space..Fiona Templeton
Equipment..Miranda Payne.....
A.N. OTHER..Mike Parker.....
Conditions..Lindsay Moran....
Body/aural..Howard Slaughter, Wayland

Longer term roles for the following period to be decided unanimously. No person should have the same role more than twice in succession.

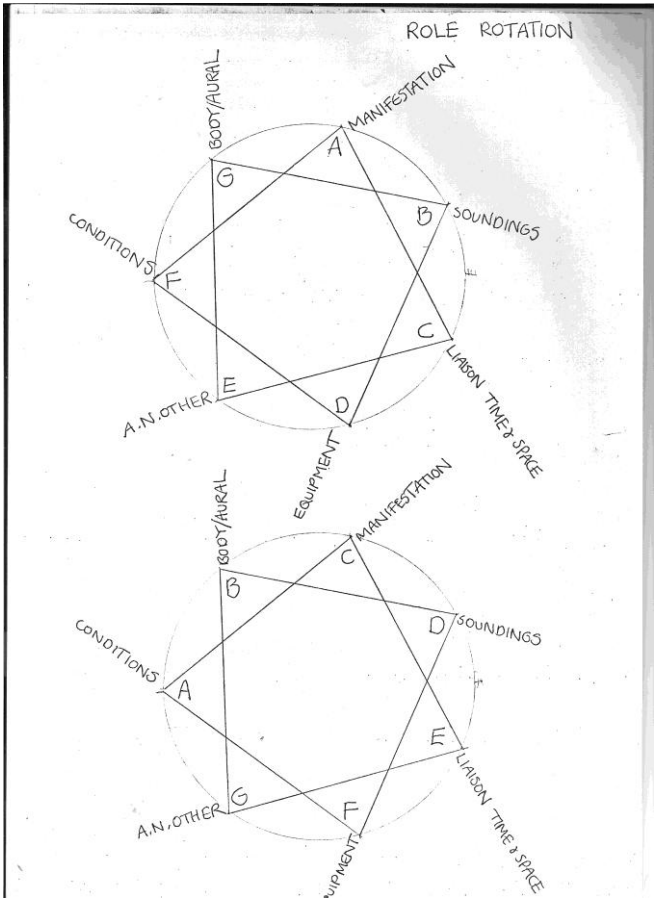
Notes from The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

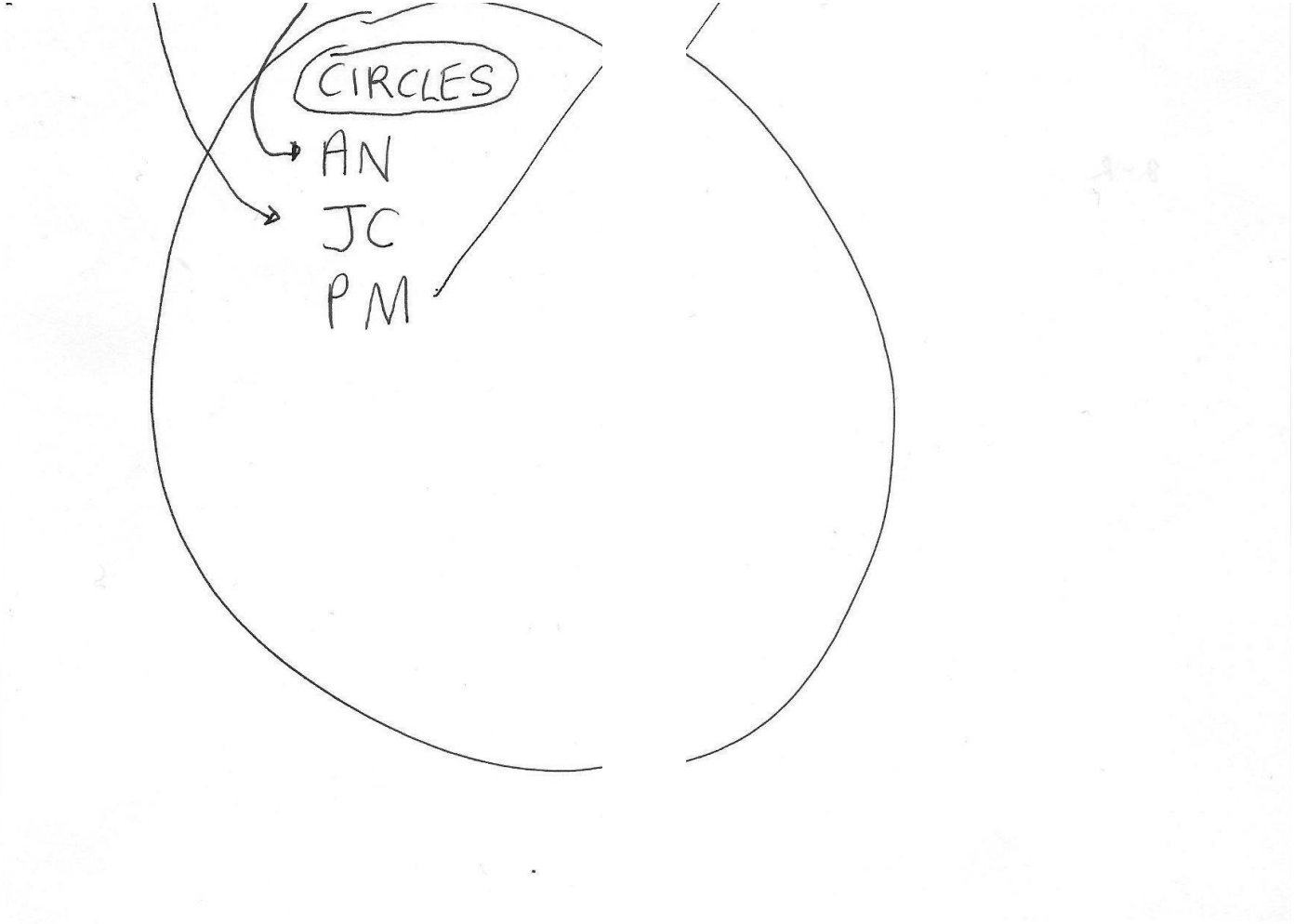


Page from The Theatre of Mistakes Archive, nd, c. Summer 1975 delineating the various roles within the group, changeable and determined by chance



Purdies Farm, Hartley Wintney:
ROLE-SWAPPING GAME

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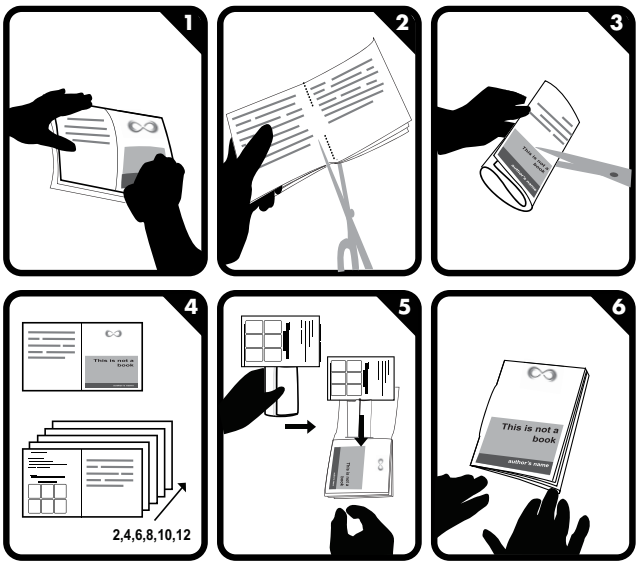


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – S

Marie-Anne Mancio

Sabotage
Samovar
Scape: A Labour of Love
Scenes at a Table
Schneeman, Carolee
Science Fiction
Sculpture
Secrets
Serpentine
Seventies
Sherman, Stuart
Signe Lie Howell
Silver
Smoking
Solos
Solution
Some Matterhorns
Songs
Soundings
Southend Green Women's Liberation group
Station House Opera
Stickland, Peter
Strategies
The Street
Structures
Subtractive
Summer Pieces
Summer Show 5
Swoons
Systems

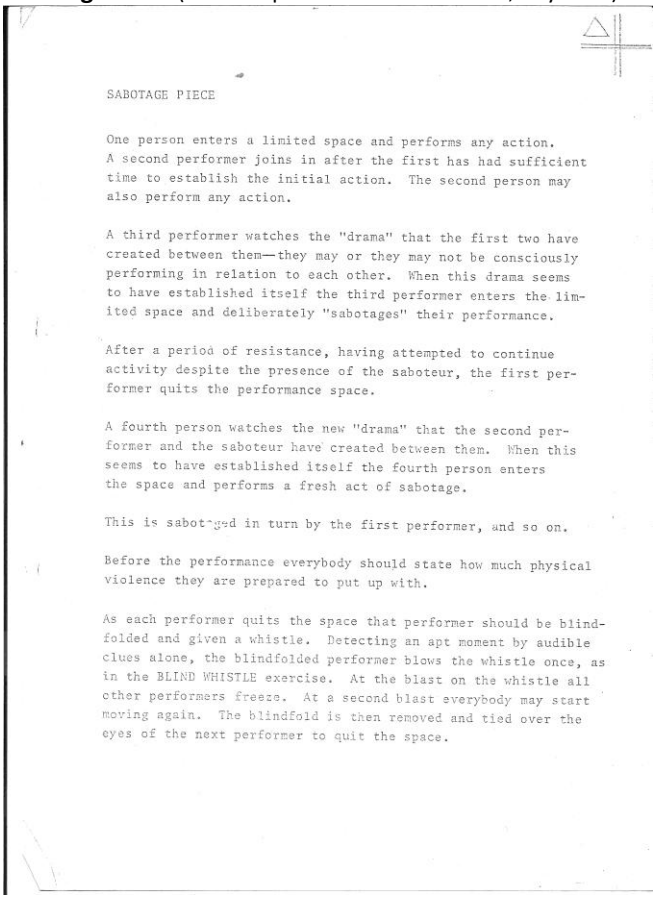
The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

S

Marie-Anne Mancio

Sabotage Piece (Southampton Performance Show, July 1975)



SABOTAGE PIECE

One person enters a limited space and performs any action. A second performer joins in after the first has had sufficient time to establish the initial action. The second person may also perform any action.

A third performer watches the "drama" that the first two have created between them—they may or they may not be consciously performing in relation to each other. When this drama seems to have established itself the third performer enters the limited space and deliberately "sabotages" their performance.

After a period of resistance, having attempted to continue activity despite the presence of the saboteur, the first performer quits the performance space.

A fourth person watches the new "drama" that the second performer and the saboteur have created between them. When this seems to have established itself the fourth person enters the space and performs a fresh act of sabotage.

This is sabotaged in turn by the first performer, and so on.

Before the performance everybody should state how much physical violence they are prepared to put up with.

As each performer quits the space that performer should be blindfolded and given a whistle. Detecting an apt moment by audible clues alone, the blindfolded performer blows the whistle once, as in the BLIND WHISTLE exercise. At the blast on the whistle all other performers freeze. At a second blast everybody may start moving again. The blindfold is then removed and tied over the eyes of the next performer to quit the space.

Samovar See **Economics**

Scape: A Labour of Love

The text for *Birth Ballet Chorale*.

Scenes at a Table (London Calling, July 1976)

See also: Audiences, *Homage to Pietro Longhi*, Michael Craig-Martin, Serpentine, *Summer Show 5*

Schneeman, Carolee (1939-)

American multidisciplinary artist famous for her 1975 performance *Interior Scroll* (see www.caroleeschneemann.com). In 1974, she performed *Up To And Including Her Limits* at the London Film Makers Co-op and Artists Meeting Place (venues). Signe Lie Howell recalls seeing Schneemann's work; despite sharing its feminist ideology, she wanted an aesthetic less focused on body art. See also: Anthony McCall who photographed her performances.

Science Fiction

Howard Tong was a fan of science fiction author Samuel R. Delany.

Sculpture

[Gilbert and] George: "We were taught at St. Martin's that sculpture was like dentistry." ('Naked Human Artists: Wolf Jahn talks to Gilbert & George', *Tate Etc.* Issue 9, Spring 2007)

Despite art schools flourishing in the UK, students such as Miranda Payne (at Maidstone) found themselves struggling with the rigidity of their departments. Performance offered a different approach away from the machismo of Anthony Caro-style welding or the minimalist approaches of Judd or Flavin.

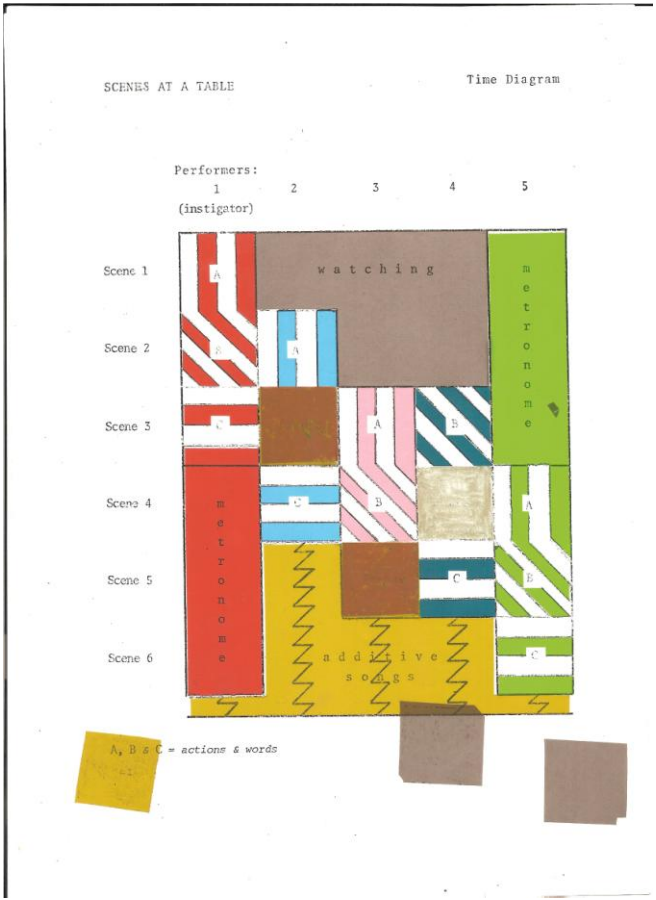
1973: Michael Craig-Martin *An Oak Tree*

1975: Tate buys Carl Andre's *Equivalent VIII* "the bricks"

Secrets

SECRETS PIECE

Ask Fiona.



Art work: *Scenes at a Table* by The Theatre of Mistakes, unframed, A4 size
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Serpentine

See also: Audiences, Michael Craig-Martin, *Scenes at a Table*, *Summer Show 5*, Venues

Seventies



Purdies farm, early 70s, Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Decimalisation Industrial antagonism Miners Strike 1973-4 Poverty Arab oil embargo post-Arab-Israeli War. 3 Day working week Changing nappies by candlelight Bay City Rollers The Winter of Discontent Fondue sets Flares Prime Minister Edward Heath (Conservative) loses 1974 election to Harold Wilson (Labour) Brown rice Jumbo jets Squatting 1976 James Callaghan (Labour) takes over Heat wave Co-ops High Unemployment Flowery Shirts Inflation Nadia Comaneci Silver Jubilee Unrest Ford Cortinas 1977 Pompidou Centre Death of Elvis 1979 Margaret Thatcher Prime Minister

Space Hoppers Freddie Laker IRA bombings Nylon David Bowie….

Rob La Frenais: "If the sixties were a period of discovery, the seventies were a time for enactment of these discoveries"
(*Performance* Dec/Jan 1980, issue 4 editorial)
By the mid-70s, community arts had become institutionalised and so there was a new professionalism about them.

Pat Murphy:
"An amazing time politically and culturally. For me, I was coming into contact with what was already an avant-garde tradition with screenings of Maya Deren and Stan Brakhage at the London Film Makers Co-op. There was also Robert Janz's sculpture, Jane Clark's water and landscape films. In performance there was Robert Wilson and Mabou Mines. Twyla Tharp's company visited London in the summer of 74 and performed at the Place and the Roundhouse. Philip Glass was an important mentor and influence. There was also Robert Ashley, Joan Jonas, Simone Forti, Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, Bruce McLean and the Pose Band, David Medalla, Marc Chamowicz etc. It was also the period in which Laura Mulvey wrote "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.""

Further reading:
Moore-Gilbert, Bart *Art in the Seventies: Cultural Closure* Routledge, 1994
See also: Bibliography, New York

Sherman, Stuart (1945-2001)
Performance artist, video/film-maker, writer. Friend to and influence on The Theatre of Mistakes. Fiona Templeton and Michael Greenall performed in his work.
For an article on Sherman, see:
Kenneth Bernard, "The 'Queerest' Conclusions: The Theater of Stuart Sherman" *American Drama*, Summer 2005
and:
Interview between Peter Stickland and Robin Deacon at Camden Arts Centre, June 2006 (www.robindeacon.com)
Stickland's novel *Loving* also describes Sherman in performance.

Signe Lie Howell see Howell, Signe Lie

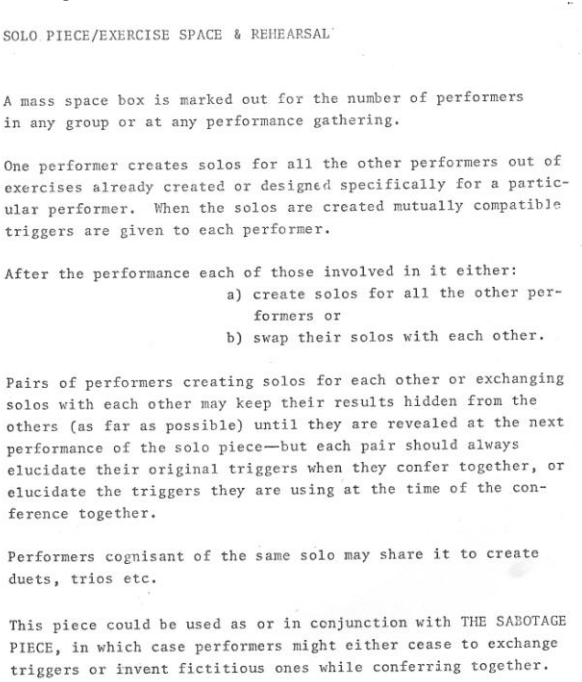
Silver



Purdies farm, nd
Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Smoking
As far as Andrew Eden recalls, Anthony McCall decided to give up smoking cigarettes in the early 70s and to start taking 20 photographs a day instead as it cost the same.
(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008)

Solos: (Aug 1975, Hartley Wintney etc.) Also: *(Set 1) with Accumulating Costume Rule, Ninth Method, Table Moves.*



SOLO PIECE/EXERCISE SPACE & REHEARSAL

A mass space box is marked out for the number of performers in any group or at any performance gathering.

One performer creates solos for all the other performers out of exercises already created or designed specifically for a particular performer. When the solos are created mutually compatible triggers are given to each performer.

After the performance each of those involved in it either:
a) create solos for all the other performers or
b) swap their solos with each other.

Pairs of performers creating solos for each other or exchanging solos with each other may keep their results hidden from the others (as far as possible) until they are revealed at the next performance of the solo piece—but each pair should always elucidate their original triggers when they confer together, or elucidate the triggers they are using at the time of the conference together.

Performers cognisant of the same solo may share it to create duets, trios etc.

This piece could be used as or in conjunction with THE SABOTAGE PIECE, in which case performers might either cease to exchange triggers or invent fictitious ones while conferring together.

Notes © The Theatre of Mistakes, c. 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Solution (see **Mistakes** for problem)
Both *Preparations for Displacement* and *The Street* date to 1975 (the year Fiona Templeton joined The Theatre of Mistakes), not 1974 as stated. See the poster for the Cambridge Poetry Festival and programs for *The Street* for corroboration.

Some Matterhorns See Lindsay Moran

Songs See *Homage to Pietro Longhi*, *Going*, Music, *Scenes at a Table*, The *Street*

The Soundings
See: Documentation, Roles
"are one of the most important areas of our activities and urgently requires publication – as this would allow a rapid dissemination of our work, art and ideas."[1]

Southend Green Women's Liberation group
See also: Feminism, Women
Anthony Howell's then wife and collaborator, Signe Lie Howell, was a member and through this she recruited friend and economist Vicky Chick:

[1] Notes from a funding application to the Arts Council of England, Anthony Howell, 1977.

"We weren't in the Southend Green Women's Group for nothing […] It did meet in the flat [at Ascham Street, Kentish town, where Anthony Howell and Signe Lie lived]. I'm sure that's how I first met Anthony. I first got roped into poetry readings, reading Anthony's poetry." (Interview: UCL, London, Nov 4th 2008)

Station House Opera

Performance company formed in 1980, known for its large-scale, architectural performances which have made use of flying.
Read: http://www.stationhouseopera.com/about/4/ for its history. See Julian Maynard Smith and Miranda Payne.
Peter Stickland is on their Board of Trustees.
Current projects include a tour of *Mind Out* and, on the 26th July 2009, the toppling of a giant path of concrete dominoes, 15km long, snaking between the 5 host boroughs of the 2012 London Olympics and ParaOlympics.
Read: *A Split Second of Paradise,* Station House Opera, 2008.

Stickland, Peter (1948-)

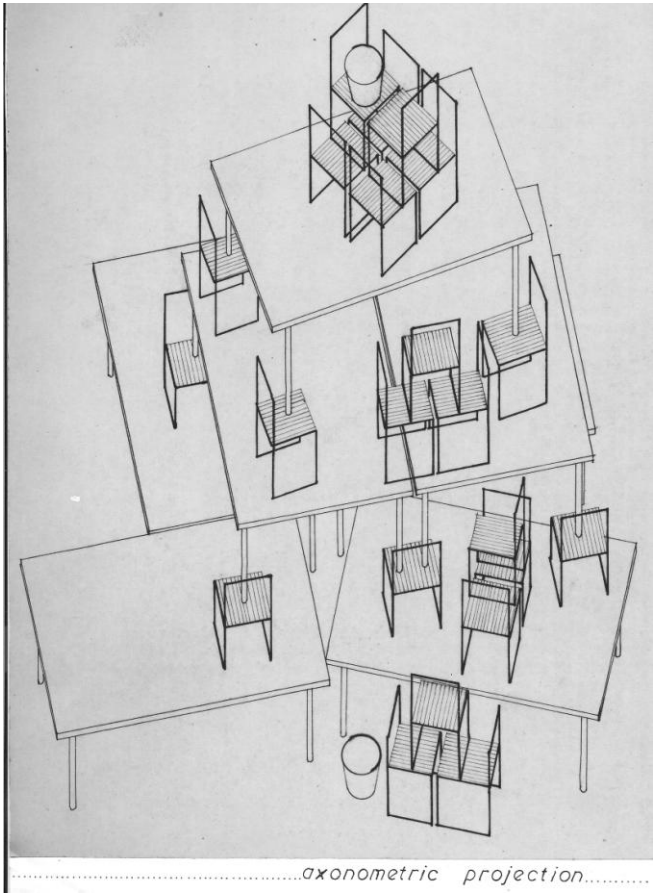
Peter Stickland studied at the Architectural Association in the 1970s. He joined The Theatre of Mistakes in April 1976 (not long before Lindsay Moran left), performing in works such as *Homage to Pietro Longhi*, *Two Journeys, Ascent of the Stedelijk*, *Going, Homage to Morandi*. His drawings for the group – which range from wall charts for the performers in *Waterfall*, set constructions, illustrations for *Homage to Morandi* (reproduced in the script published in 2006 by Greysuit editions) – act as notations and artworks in their own right.
In 1982, he and Fiona Templeton devised and performed *Against Agreement* in New York. The title was inspired by the way Anthony Howell had introduced them to someone ("This is Peter, he's for agreement; this is Fiona, she's against agreement.") The work was reviewed in the December 7th *Village Voice*:

"As Stickland and Templeton played out their verbal duel, the distance between them was peopled by "a scenic metronome drunk" and "a rhythmic metronome barmaid" as well as by a chorus of three men and three women who sang, argued, climbed up on the bar and fell off it, and looked like punk extras in a film noir in shades of white, gray, and red."
(Sally Banes *Subversive Expectations* University of Michigan Press, 1988, 145)

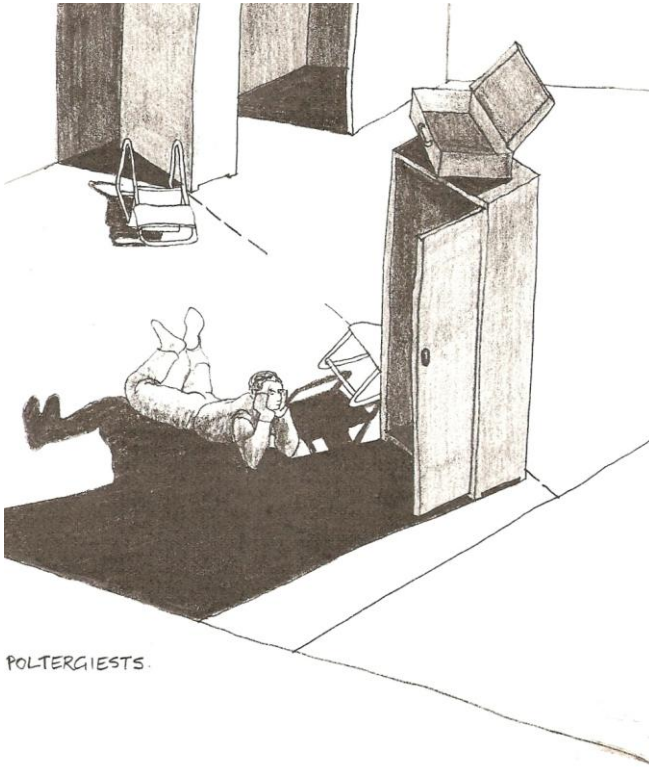
Now a Course Director at Chelsea College of Art and Design, and founder of 77books (a new press for literary fiction and artists' books), Stickland's explorations for the possibilities of narrative have moved from architecture to design to fiction. His novels include: *Dido and Aeneas* (about the collaboration between Henry Purcell and Nahum Tate in the creation of England's first opera); *Loving* (the love story of performer Jack and writer Adelia); and *Mairi's Wedding* (which draws on the writings of Scottish author Neil Munro). The chapter "Guilty" in *Loving* refers to The Theatre of Mistakes *First Conversation Piece* and "Partners" describes a workshop.



Peter Stickland in *Homage to Morandi* Photos: ©Niamh Ferguson?/The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Waterfall drawing by Peter Stickland, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Homage To Morandi (see Bibliography) drawing by Peter Stickland

Below: Greenall, Stickland, Howell, and Johnson in *Going*



Strategies

Fiona Templeton's father designed crossword puzzles. Describing Templeton's performance *You: The City*, Peter Stickland said, "Fiona's wonderful about strategies and words to contain them. [*You: The City*] It's a very simple structure…. Normally there's a stage and a big group of people, [here] there's a big group of performers and just one person. You reverse it. It's against agreement again. If this is the hypothesis, this is the alternative."
(Interview: Chelsea School of Art, London, June 08)

The Street (Ascham Street, NW3, July, 1975)
See also: Audiences, Diagrams
With Choice by Chance (a conceptual presence from the inception of The Ting) as the preferred method of determining roles, Pat Murphy, Fiona Templeton and Mickey Greenall were selected to devise a work (*The Street*). The die also chose Templeton as its director.
Posters for *The Street* inform that "Between 7pm and 10pm, on Sunday the 13th of July, a section of Ascham Street in Kentish Town will become THE TING: THEATRE OF MISTAKES. Rehearsals will be held there between the same hours every Sunday up to the performance to discover how a section of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes becomes ASCHAM STREET, KENTISH TOWN. Everyone's attendance is welcome in any of the following capacities: Audience in rehearsals; performer in the show; audience at the show; performer in rehearsals."
The eventual performance involved 60 people and ten weeks of rehearsal. The diagram in the program differentiates between the performance and audience areas and gives the potential participant instructions like "Do not overtake anyone unless they are completely stationary." The work was complex: residents' living rooms – sofas, rugs, televisions – were re-located to the street; there was a chorus derived from snippets of overheard conversation; windows were opened and closed triggered by actions below; people mirrored one another's actions; there were camouflaged children, a skip, dustbins, even an ice cream van. Vicki Chick described it: "One person was designated to stand stock still at performance tension on the pavement for an hour. That is extremely difficult. Really, very, very difficult [see Speaking Stones]. And people would drive down and someone would flip themselves on the bonnet of a car […] A few people used the wall as if it were chairs and lay down and put their legs up…these sorts of positions. And the reaction was of course complete bafflement and some amusement. No-one hung around very long. It wasn't an area of much traffic either and so there wasn't much of an audience."
(Interview: Nov 4th 2008, UCL, London)



Program for *The Street*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

"It was like a studio session, but with the oddness of having an audience. I remember Anthony [Howell] including their hostile remarks as part of the text he was reading."
(Pat Murphy in response to Questionnaire, December 2008)

Each reader chooses two remarks each—these may be remarks generated by a previous verbal exercise.

Readers recite their lines alternately, creating their first six remark verse.

Shuffle the six lines to create the second verse, starting with the last line of the first verse followed by the first line of the first verse—ABCDEF, FAEBCD, CFDABE etc—thus generating five new verses.

Readers recite any of these verses addatively (1, 1+2 etc), choosing to perform alternate solos and duets. Any reader who identifies the first line of a verse another reader is reciting may form a duet by reciting that verse in unison with the reader who started that verse.

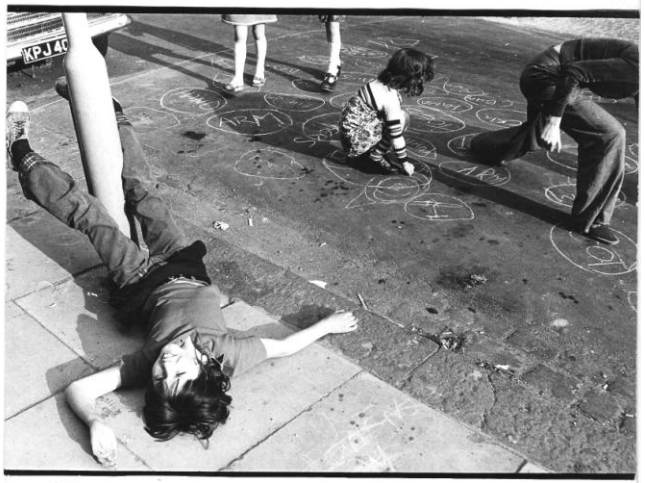
Notes from *The Street* The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



THE STREET: Rehearsal, July 1975



THE STREET: Performance, July 1975: AURAL WINDOWS



Early Rehearsal exploring ANATOMICAL CIRCLES and ANTI-GRAVITY



CIRCULATION performer rising from PROGRESSION into JOINTS EXERCISE.

Photos: ©The Theatre of Mistakes
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

DRESS REHEARSAL: Basic AMPLIFICATION soundings

Shh I don't know Won't be long dear Norman Who's
Shut up not closing time bye night night I've got
ears you know What are you doing they Fiona Robert
I can see your head Can we talk while we everyone who's
standing on the floor when the windows come down It's too
late fall down up windows won't be long I'm not
Come back to the mini good doggie hey-ho.

Norman See you in the morning What are you doing Slowly
Shut up Robert I can see your head you what they get
up everyone Whom which what do you know how to plant
cabbages see where going it was a ******* mistake I
don't care what is on the next menu you have to get up
slowly do you know what happened to her It's too late.

Stop it They're spitting at me stop it shout out
whatever ********* hears as well yes goodbye who said
that hello vicious when he said get knotted get up
very slowly I don't want to go next Miranda Get off
Rubbish come on then you'll deal with the people who come
into the room you're not supposed to It's terrible It's
got to go round like that look at this then It's good
It's too fast so nice I lost my chalk no student
What am I doing I hate you that's ideas Norman

And into amplification I've got ears you know won't be long
dear Norman bye Norman Not closing time I've got
ears you know Brass knobs shut up night night shh
Fiona Can we talk while we Robert I can see your head
Windows everyone who's on the floor get up slowly It's
too late we're gonna get Fall down are you talking
I'm not Norman good doggie Got to do fast runs ouch.

Notes from *The Street* The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Structures
Structure was one of the major preoccupations of The Theatre of Mistakes. For Anthony Howell, this was primarily spatial and probably influenced by his training as a ballet dancer.

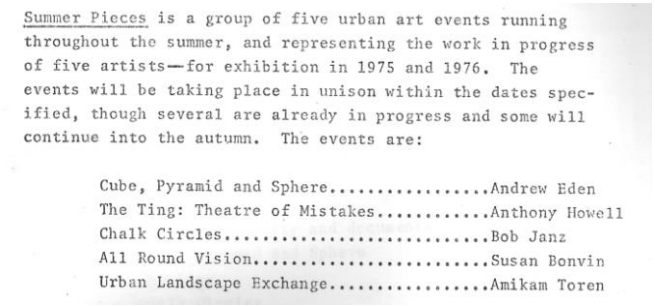
Interview: Peter Stickland, Marie-Anne Mancio, London, June 08:
MM: It's interesting how he subverted the space…in the ballet, the *corps de ballet* are at the back

PS: Yes absolutely. And ballet's dynamic, spatially. So the same structures are going through it. In *Elements* there are prop exercises, movement exercises… all chosen from a spatial dynamic, the verbal ones are chosen from a verbal dynamic [allowing us to be] very dynamic in the space without any reason to be dynamic.
And this thing I was saying before about structure. It was what we agreed. We didn't agree on any narrative, on any scenario, on any character play. We only agreed that that was a good structure, and that's what we did collaboratively. That's a huge amount of stuff to share, 'cos nobody had it, could talk about it, define it."

See also: Additive, Music

Subtractive See **Additive**
Also: Systems, *Waterfall*

Summer Pieces

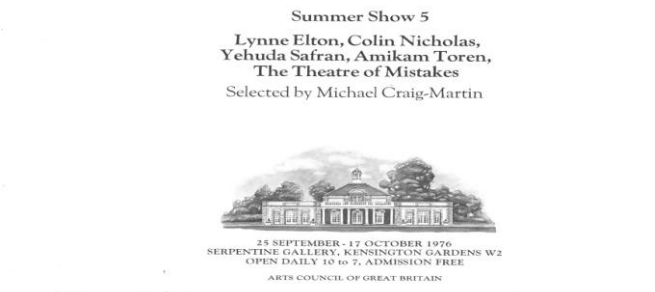


Summer Pieces is a group of five urban art events running throughout the summer, and representing the work in progress of five artists—for exhibition in 1975 and 1976. The events will be taking place in unison within the dates specified, though several are already in progress and some will continue into the autumn. The events are:

Cube, Pyramid and Sphere.....Andrew Eden
The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes.....Anthony Howell
Chalk Circles.....Bob Janz
All Round Vision.....Susan Bonvin
Urban Landscape Exchange.....Amikam Toren

Press release, 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive
See: *Wallpaper*

Summer Show 5
See also: Audiences, Bibliography, Critics, Amikam Toren
The Theatre of Mistakes performed *Homage to Pietro Longhi* at the Serpentine in 1976 at Michael Craig-Martin's invitation.



Invite to *Summer Show 5*

Swoons

A literary description of fainting…

Part of the movement vocabulary, post-trigger, in *Going* and earlier in *Scenes at a Table: Homage to Pietro Longhi*.

Longhi

> dict the structure. Repetition is made more difficult by being performed on tiptoe, and swoons result as a consequence of standing on tiptoe for extended periods; instigator becomes

Program Notes for *Scenes at a Table: Homage to Pietro Longhi*, 1976
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Systems

Fiona Templeton believes Anthony Howell's interest was in systems whereas hers was in games.
(Conversation: Manhattan, 12th Sept, 2008)
Waterfall is the ultimate example of this.

Andrew Eden concurs, suggesting that in 1974, "People were very excited by what I suppose had been happening in New York about three years before so, for instance, Anthony McCall's piece… Looking at the first issue [of *Wallpaper]* nearly every work in here is all kind of systems-based."
(Interview: Eden and Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov, 2008)

The Waterfall:

An empty pail and a full one stand next to each other on the ground. An hour chimes and an hour is counted out by the transference of water from one pail to the other, its end marked by a cascade back into the original pail. There is only one performer, scooping the water out of the pail with one cup, pouring it into another cup and then pouring it into the other pail. Twenty counts for each action, sixty cupfuls of water in the full pail. This is the lowest waterfall.

There are twentyfour different waterfalls. The time at which the performance takes place gets later through the week, then starts in the morning again, to repeat the habit of beginning at a later time, day by day.

There are two pails, a number of cups, tables and chairs, and a number of performers—the force behind the fall: one performer and the lowest waterfall, two performers and a higher one, three performers and an even higher waterfall, four performers and a waterfall higher still. So it goes until there are twelve performers, pouring out and catching up the water as it travels from cup to cup, at last reaching the higher pail, where it goes to make up the highest waterfall of all.

Does an hour counted pass like an hour timed by the clock? How much bigger is a table than a chair? Can height be arranged so as to permit a vertical fall from top to bottom? Will spillage compensate for extra hands? The water rises gradually, accumulating at the top of a mountain of tables and chairs—suddenly to fall back to its emptied source at the end of an hour.

When the waterfall has reached its peak a performer is subtracted and the lower pail is raised, giving twelve of the highest waterfalls and employing progressively fewer performers until an empty pail and a full one stand ready next to each other on two chairs on top of more chairs placed on a table balanced on several more chairs placed on two tables balanced on still more chairs placed on top of four more tables.

Having ascended and increased, and then having remained at its highest while diminishing, the waterfall continues at its highest while it increases again so that it may descend and diminish as it begun on the last day of the exhibition.

Twentyfour waterfalls: fortyeight performances.

* * * * *

Extracts from Press Release for *Waterfall*
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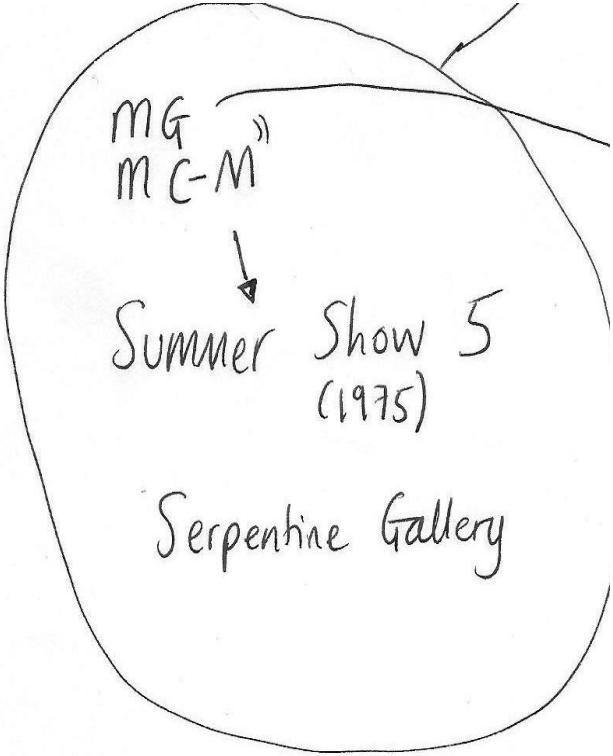
MG
MC-M"
Summer Show 5
(1975)
Serpentine Gallery

2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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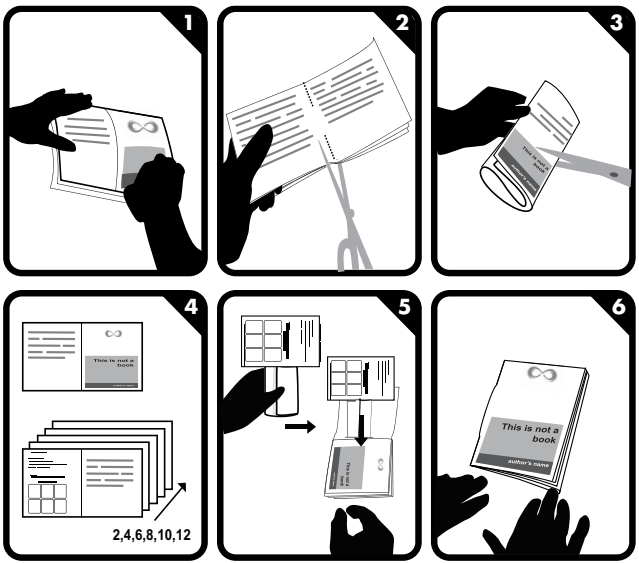


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – T & U

Marie-Anne Mancio

Table Moves

Tea
Templeton, Fiona

Three Act Piece
Theatre

Time

Ting
Tong, Howard

Toren, Amikam
Toren, Christina

Triggers
Trio
Two Freedoms
Two Journeys

Unattributed
Unexplained
Unknown

Urquhart, Anita

Venues

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

T-U

Marie-Anne Mancio

Table Moves (1981) See **Anthony Howell**

Tea

a) Fiona Templeton recalls Anthony Howell initially wanted to use cups of tea rather than water in *Waterfall*. She persuaded him otherwise. b) Andrew Eden and Susan Bonvin praise Templeton's ability to manage people: "She made sure people had breaks and cups of tea and things."
(Interview: Peterborough, 24th Nov, 2008)

Templeton, Fiona (1951-)

has been described as:

a poet; conceptually sophisticated; influenced by the French *nouveau roman*, the work of OuLiPo, Georges Perec, Robbe-Grillet, Fluxus, Gertrude Stein ; the really beautiful one; adept at games; co-founder of The Theatre of Mistakes who began work with the Ting in March 1975.

"Fiona is a strategist; her father made crosswords. If you read *Elements of Performance Art* you get a fantastic sense of Fiona's voice."
(Conversation: Peter Stickland, London, Jan 2009)

Andrew Eden: "Fiona was a key person in the development of The Theatre of Mistakes."
(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008)

"A skilled performer, her mathematical abilities and her talent for logical analysis helped pioneer the development of the company."

Theatre of Mistakes Program for Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre, March 1981
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Fiona Templeton with Robert Janz's *Six Sticks* c.1975
Photo: ©Bob Janz?/ The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

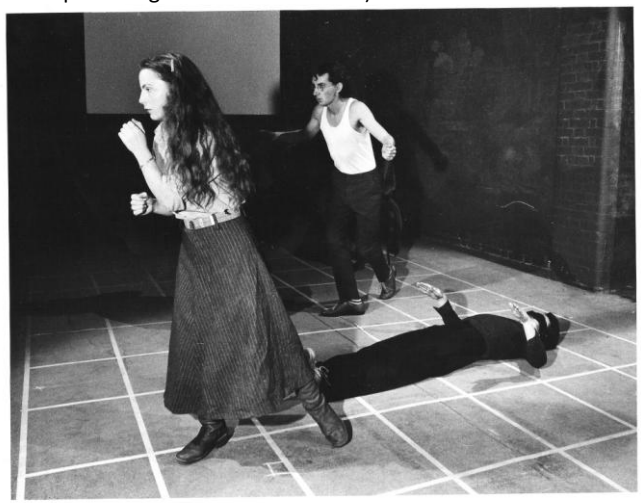
"Fiona had a big input in writing as well; she was very strong in her ideas."
(Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov 2008)

Interview: Victoria Chick and Marie-Anne Mancio, London, 4th Nov 2008:
VC: She was marvellous. She'd been a dancer, had she?
MM: No, I don't think she had.
VC: She was very physically competent.

A member of the Core Group, former partner of Anthony Howell, Templeton remained in New York after The Theatre of Mistakes toured *Going* there. Though she returned to tour with the company in Europe, she had already begun developing her solo practice and went on to create and perform seminal works such as *YOU-The City; L'Ile, The Medead* as well as continuing to write poetry (she was senior writer-in-residence at Cambridge University), academic papers, and contribute to *Grey Suit*. Currently MA Convenor in Performance at Brunel University and director of **The Relationship** in New York with whom she developed *Coming* with *Going* (2008):
"Two acts of *Going* are replaced with *Coming*, a work that takes the task and structure of The Theatre of Mistakes' earlier *Homage to Pietro Longhi*. Like the latter, *Coming* relies heavily on improvisation. There is Katy Brown's terrifying boot camp leader who screams her way through a gruelling set of physical exercises, drenching herself with bottled water; Stephanie Silver's leap from a table top in high heels. The audience is co-opted – asked to hold a spool or choose a playing card, to put on lipstick. Structure is less legible. Spatially, *Coming* leaks beyond the taped borders of *Going* as a performer exits the intimate theatre to the street. Like boisterous revellers, others clamber over swags of ribbon, toss shreds of paper, skid on a slippery wet floor."
(Review by Marie-Anne Mancio *RealTime Arts 88, Dec/Jan 09*)

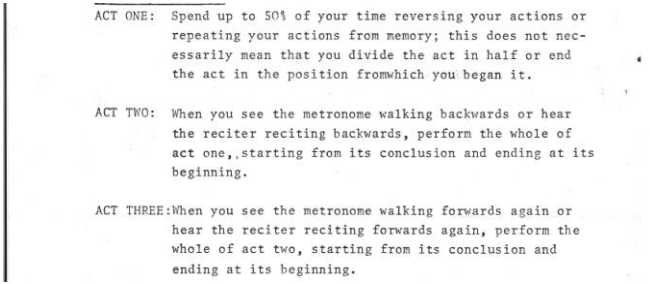
See: Bibliography, *Five Concert Pieces, Going, Manifesto, Mutuality, Preparations for Displacement*, *The Street, Three Act Piece, Waterfall*
Further reading:
Champagne, Leonora (ed.) *Out from Under: Texts by Women Performance Artists,* Theater Communications Group, US, 1991

Three Act Piece (1976)
Featuring: a table, a chair, a blindfold, and a goldfish (whose life, Lindsay Moran recalls, was often endangered by the performers' uncompromising adherence to rules…)



Fiona Templeton and Lindsay Moran
Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

The complex structure of this work -



ACT ONE: Spend up to 50% of your time reversing your actions or repeating your actions from memory; this does not necessarily mean that you divide the act in half or end the act in the position fromwhich you began it.

ACT TWO: When you see the metronome walking backwards or hear the reciter reciting backwards, perform the whole of act one, starting from its conclusion and ending at its beginning.

ACT THREE: When you see the metronome walking forwards again or hear the reciter reciting forwards again, perform the whole of act two, starting from its conclusion and ending at its beginning.

with its metronome prefigures *Going* and its thorough documentation marks a shift in professionalism for the company.

It was described in press releases as "a demonstration of fate in action."

See also: Anthony Howell, Art Schools, London Exhibition, Julian Maynard Smith, Miranda Payne

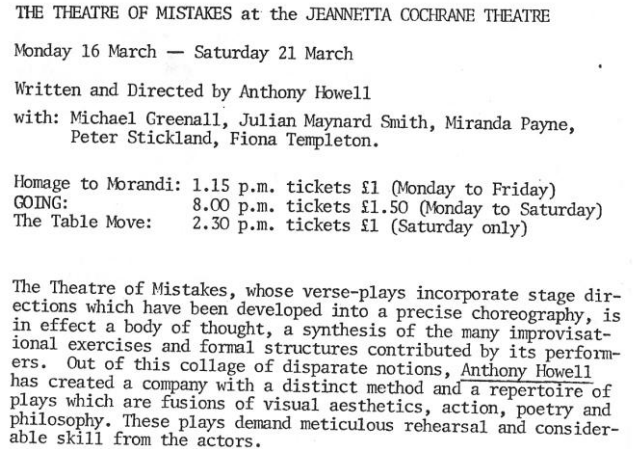
Theatre

"We are not acting. We are not miming. Nothing is characterized."
('Afterword' *Preparations for Displacement*, 1975)

"I was interested – and still am-in how the Ting utilized ideas of duration and repetition. I liked the critique of "theatricality", of inauthentic forms of performance and I remember how, after a while, even the most pared down Beckett performance would seem too theatrical and contrived to me."
(Pat Murphy, Response to Questionnaire, Dec 2008)

Cf Julian Maynard Smith on Station House Opera:
"We definitely wanted to make a distinction between what we were doing and theatre as we perceived it. There was a valid distinction to be made - the aesthetics which guide the decisions we make are often not 'theatrical' at all."
(www.vizlang.co.uk/readings/Smith)

Whilst texts (programs, press releases, and so forth) produced in the early days of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes reference notions of mutuality and collaboration, later ones appear to contradict this, presenting the company as a more traditionally structured organism with a 'writer' and 'director':



THE THEATRE OF MISTAKES at the JEANNETTA COCHRANE THEATRE

Monday 16 March — Saturday 21 March

Written and Directed by Anthony Howell

with: Michael Greenall, Julian Maynard Smith, Miranda Payne, Peter Stickland, Fiona Templeton.

Homage to Morandi: 1.15 p.m. tickets £1 (Monday to Friday)
GOING: 8.00 p.m. tickets £1.50 (Monday to Saturday)
The Table Move: 2.30 p.m. tickets £1 (Saturday only)

The Theatre of Mistakes, whose verse-plays incorporate stage directions which have been developed into a precise choreography, is in effect a body of thought, a synthesis of the many improvisational exercises and formal structures contributed by its performers. Out of this collage of disparate notions, Anthony Howell has created a company with a distinct method and a repertoire of plays which are fusions of visual aesthetics, action, poetry and philosophy. These plays demand meticulous rehearsal and considerable skill from the actors.

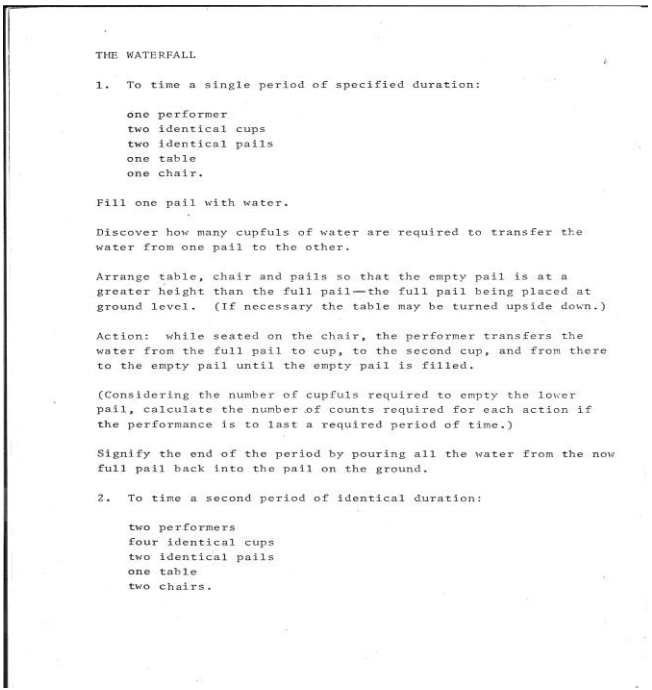
Program notes 1981, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Time

Susan Bonvin recalls the weekend at Purdies farm, August, 1974:
"It was an experience in time. It wasn't one thing finished and another began. The installation of the things was part of it."
(Interview: Andrew Eden and Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov, 2008)
"The time-structures were all fairly conceptual in the way that music is. There was a piece that was constructed exactly like a

fugue. The material was improvised within that structure, but it was repeated, inverted done backwards - all the kinds of musical procedures which give a plasticity to time and space which in theatre doesn't really apply."
(Julian Maynard Smith in www.vizlang.co.uk/readings/Smith)

Waterfall was originally conceived as a timing device, utiilising natural time.



THE WATERFALL

1. To time a single period of specified duration:

one performer
two identical cups
two identical pails
one table
one chair.

Fill one pail with water.

Discover how many cupfuls of water are required to transfer the water from one pail to the other.

Arrange table, chair and pails so that the empty pail is at a greater height than the full pail—the full pail being placed at ground level. (If necessary the table may be turned upside down.)

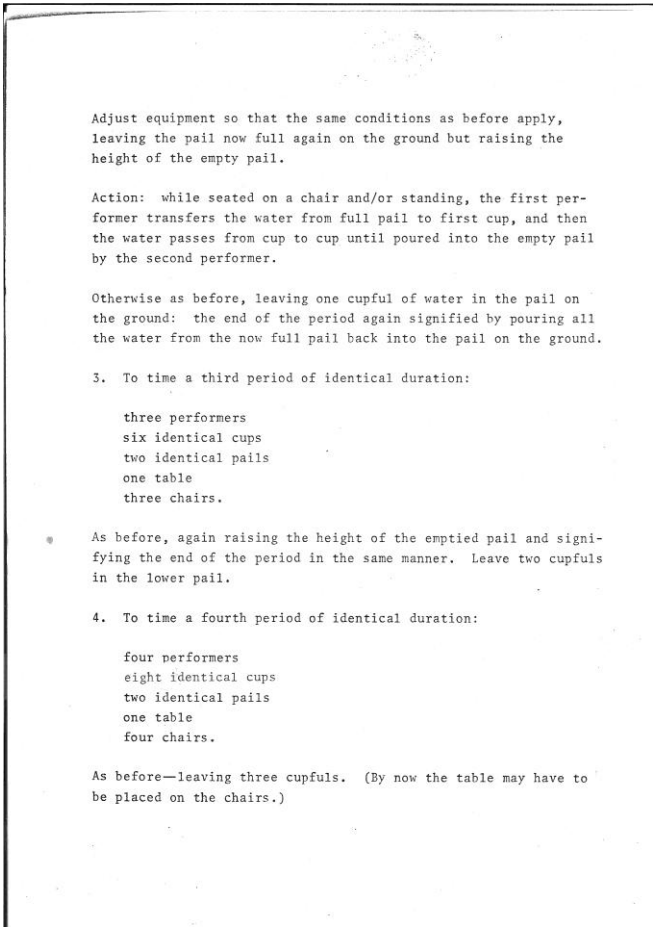
Action: while seated on the chair, the performer transfers the water from the full pail to cup, to the second cup, and from there to the empty pail until the empty pail is filled.

(Considering the number of cupfuls required to empty the lower pail, calculate the number of counts required for each action if the performance is to last a required period of time.)

Signify the end of the period by pouring all the water from the now full pail back into the pail on the ground.

2. To time a second period of identical duration:

two performers
four identical cups
two identical pails
one table
two chairs.



Adjust equipment so that the same conditions as before apply, leaving the pail now full again on the ground but raising the height of the empty pail.

Action: while seated on a chair and/or standing, the first performer transfers the water from full pail to first cup, and then the water passes from cup to cup until poured into the empty pail by the second performer.

Otherwise as before, leaving one cupful of water in the pail on the ground: the end of the period again signified by pouring all the water from the now full pail back into the pail on the ground.

3. To time a third period of identical duration:

three performers
six identical cups
two identical pails
one table
three chairs.

As before, again raising the height of the emptied pail and signifying the end of the period in the same manner. Leave two cupfuls in the lower pail.

4. To time a fourth period of identical duration:

four performers
eight identical cups
two identical pails
one table
four chairs.

As before—leaving three cupfuls. (By now the table may have to be placed on the chairs.)

Notes from The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

5. To time a fifth period of identical duration:

five performers
ten identical cups
two identical pails
one table
five chairs.

As before—leaving three cupfuls. (By now the table on top of the chairs may have to have the additional chair placed on top of it.)

Further periods of identical duration will require proportional increase in cups and furniture.

See also: Conceptualism, Diagrams

Ting



Standing stone between Lochs of Asta and Tingwall
Photo: Mike Pennington

In the early Seventies, Anthony Howell's then wife, Norwegian Signe Lie Howell introduced him to the Norse Ting: a governing assembly of free people in a province, presided over by the King or a *law-speaker* who would memorise and recite the law. It represented the democratic ideal; it was usually a site deployed for rituals; a place of meetings where weapons were left outside a ring of stones and anything could be said therein.

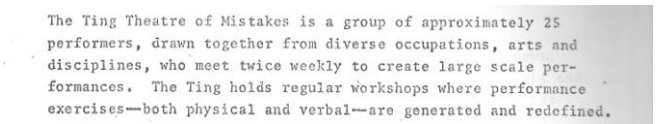
A flyer for Ting (c.1974):
"The Ting is a community of artists of all descriptions working within an arena of ritual coincidence in an attempt to build a ceremonial performance on a traditionally operatic scale of grandeur while adhering to the concepts that have spurred the development of theatre since the days of Artaud"



The Ting: An early workshop
Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Pat Murphy in response to Questionnaire, December 2008:
Ting -

"an Icelandic or Norse word meaning magic container, I think. The Ting was initially a group of artists whose work ranged from poetry to film, painting, performance and sculpture, coming together to explore the potential of extending their work beyond the studio into a group performance-focused situation. Some people didn't see it as more than that and they felt that their work was enriched by their experience in those sessions. There were no rehearsals as such. Each week was seen as a performance. I was conscious that this was something special. Coming from a Fine Art background, I was dissatisfied with a lot of 1970s performance art and experimental theatre. As a dancer and poet, Anthony brought an incredible rigour and discipline to each session. He also had a vision of how the Ting could develop. At the same time, those early session were quite anarchic – with lots of improvised movement and weeks in which each person would direct a session. However, Anthony was definitely the leader and as that summer went on, we were influenced by the vocabulary of movement and language which he developed."


The Ting Theatre of Mistakes is a group of approximately 25 performers, drawn together from diverse occupations, arts and disciplines, who meet twice weekly to create large scale performances. The Ting holds regular workshops where performance exercises—both physical and verbal—are generated and redefined.

Extract from notes for *Summer Pieces*, 1975
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive


The Ting at Artists Meeting Place, November 1974
Photo: Bob Janz? The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Tong, Howard (1954-)
See also: Car, *Five Concert Pieces,* Lindsay Moran, *The Street*

Howard Tong was studying Interiors at Maidstone (see Art Schools) and was sent to mime artist Lindsay Kemp (Tong insists his work with Kemp was "dreadful"). He liked the work of Nice Style and sculptor/performance artist Bruce McLean and joined Ting after taking part in Anthony Howell's workshop. He recalls that he and Howell were the group's mainstay till the arrival of Fiona Templeton and the establishment of a Core Group, The Theatre of Mistakes.



Howard Tong in *Preparations for Displacement* (April 1975)
Photo:©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Tong shared an apartment with Mickey Greenall (see Mud Man) and remembers them holding many dinner parties and eventually married Anita Urquhart. He went on to become Chief Visual Merchandiser at Harvey Nichols, creating many of their famous window displays. He has since co-founded a collective of designers (see www. **ksht.co.uk**) with former partner Kathryn Scanlan, which specialises in window- dressing, shop-fitting, displays, and creating environments for exhibitions.



Tong created performance/installations including one with Richard Rayner-Cannon (photographer) at *Filtro di Luce* (Acme gallery, 10th August 1978) where Howell also performed on the 11th.
Photo courtesy of Howard Tong.

Toren, Amikam (1945-)
See also *Ballet for Cars*, *Birth Ballet Chorale*, *Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session*, Purdies, *Two Journeys*
Artist involved with Ting and co-founder/editor of *Wallpaper*.
See: www.anthonyreynolds.com/biogs/toren.htm for biography
Sargent Fellow of the British School at Rome in 2009.

March-July 1975:



PATH OF BOXES

One sculptor (Amikam Toren) to lay his boxes alongside of each other or on top of each other, in a regular path over the performance space.

PATH OF DUSTBINS

Adaptation of LINE OF BOXES used in The Cambridge Performance ("Preparations for Displacement")—the action disguised by employing three plastic dustbins instead of boxes. These dustbins to be moved slowly across the factory pavement, taking three hours to cross the width of the performance space once.

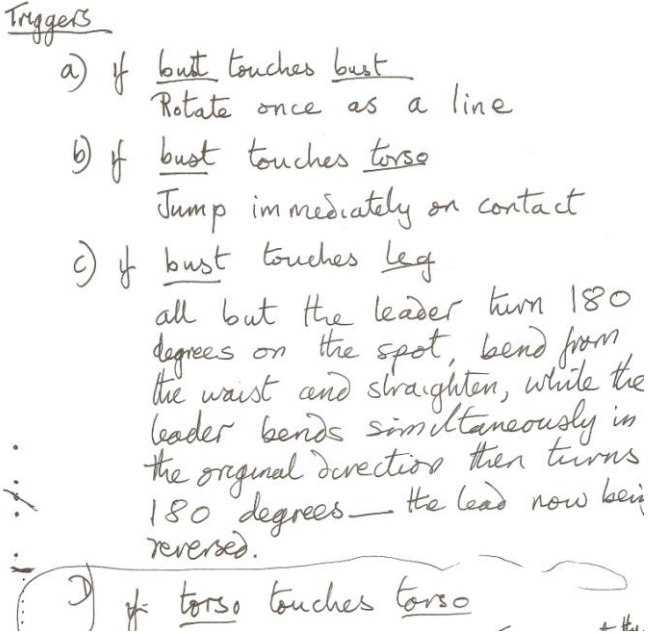
Extract from *The Street* (1975), comb-bound book
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Serpentine Summer Show Invite Card

Toren, Christina
Anthropologist, then wife of Amikam Toren, friend to Signe Lie Howell. Participant *Birth Ballet Chorale.* See also: Anthropology, Unwritten

Triggers
"The triggers are there to create fundamental agreements between performers"
(Program notes *Preparations for Displacement*, April 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)


Triggers

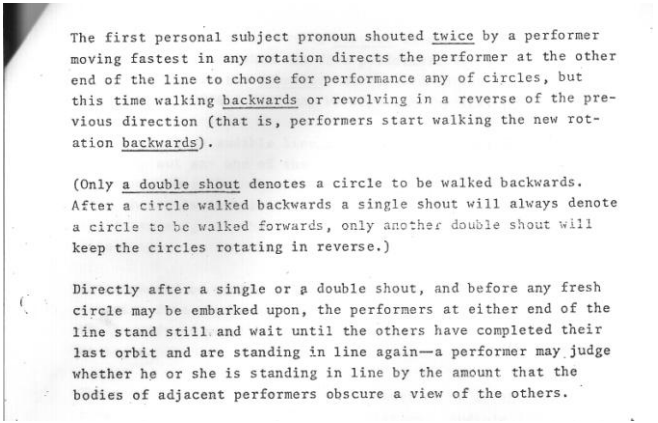
a) if bust touches bust
Rotate once as a line

b) if bust touches torso
Jump immediately on contact

c) if bust touches leg
all but the leader turn 180 degrees on the spot, bend from the waist and straighten, while the leader bends simultaneously in the original direction then turns 180 degrees — the lead now being reversed.

d) if torso touches torso

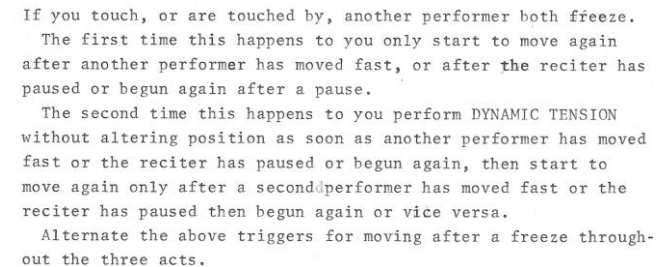
Anthony Howell's Notebook, nd
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive


The first personal subject pronoun shouted twice by a performer moving fastest in any rotation directs the performer at the other end of the line to choose for performance any of circles, but this time walking backwards or revolving in a reverse of the previous direction (that is, performers start walking the new rotation backwards).

(Only a double shout denotes a circle to be walked backwards. After a circle walked backwards a single shout will always denote a circle to be walked forwards, only another double shout will keep the circles rotating in reverse.)

Directly after a single or a double shout, and before any fresh circle may be embarked upon, the performers at either end of the line stand still and wait until the others have completed their last orbit and are standing in line again—a performer may judge whether he or she is standing in line by the amount that the bodies of adjacent performers obscure a view of the others.

Extract from *Active Circles*, nd, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive


If you touch, or are touched by, another performer both freeze.

The first time this happens to you only start to move again after another performer has moved fast, or after the reciter has paused or begun again after a pause.

The second time this happens to you perform DYNAMIC TENSION without altering position as soon as another performer has moved fast or the reciter has paused or begun again, then start to move again only after a seconddperformer has moved fast or the reciter has paused then begun again or vice versa.

Alternate the above triggers for moving after a freeze throughout the three acts.

Extract from *Three Act Piece* (1976) The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Trio (Aug 1976, Artists Market, London and Galerie Farideh Cadot, Paris). See Photographers.



Two Journeys (The Slade, UCL, 27th May 1976)

"The structure was this. One person made their journey covering the space of the Slade/UL portico. Then two performers worked in the same space and so on. In the second journey all the performers repeated what they had done in isolation the first time around, but all in the space at the same time. The entire piece was being "timed" by a further group of people performing the WATERFALL. The second journey was predicated on the fact that mistakes would inevitably occur as performers blocked and crossed each other and had to interact and figure out what to do as they attempted to repeat their first journey. Although the work manifested as formal/abstract/structural, I feel that there was in fact a narrative element in the way audiences, understanding the structure, anticipated conflict or projected a narrative onto the unfolding performance. The piece worked with tensions around the perception of the mistake before it actually happened."
(Pat Murphy, in response to Questionnaire, December 2008)

Two Freedoms (Belgrade/Vienna Biennale, April 1978-Junee 1979)

TWO FREEDOMS

In "Two Freedoms" performers are free to execute any consistent series of actions until a mistake is made, and then to perform any inconsistent actions, until again mistaken. Inconsistency constitutes the mistake in Part 1, repetition constitutes the mistake in Part 2. The conclusion is provided by the particular mistakes made during the performance.

Specifications: 4 to 6 performers. A performance space 17' by 17' (6 mtrs x 6 mtrs). Audience on all four sides. Good lighting facilities. Duration approximately 1 hour.

Consistently consistent.
Inconsistently inconsistent.

Consistently inconsistent.
Inconsistently consistent.

Consistency is a mistake in inconsistency.
Inconsistency is a mistake in consistency.

Notes in The Theatre of Mistakes Archive
Courtesy Fiona Templeton

Unattributed

See also: Gossip, Memories, Secrets Piece
Some indiscretions are best whispered. They ought to be repeated for the information they contain but to repeat them also risks enacting betrayals. Some disclosures were made in confidence. Their veracity cannot be guaranteed:
"It was like a dictatorship."
"We used to get our dope from Mike [Nyman]. He always had the best stuff"
"We all had egos"
"She always forgot her lines"
"She wasn't much fun"
"He sat on the fence"

Unexplained
No-one can explain why wigs were worn for this performance of *Going*.



Unknown
The increasing number of participants in Ting workshops throughout 1974 means some names have been forgotten.
See: Nameless

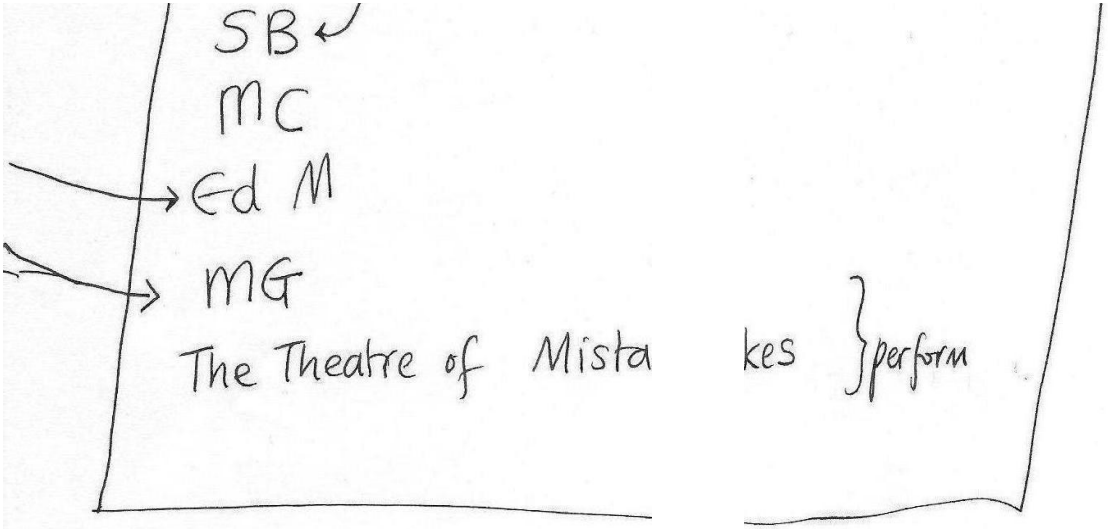
Union
"Anthony [Howell] as never keen on the Artists Union, not at all. One side of him was quite conservative though several of his friends at the time were involved."
(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008)
However, as Anthony Howell is keen to point out, The Theatre of Mistakes was never "vapidly apolitical"; they just believed that the politics resided in the structures, in the notions of Mutuality.
Cf Signe Lie Howell's belief in the personal as the political.

Unwritten
My fantasy book of essays on The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes would include:
The Theatre of Mistakes Relationship with Conceptual Art
Michael Newman
A Conversation Between Two Anthropologists Re-Visiting Ting
Professor Signe Howell and Professor Christina Toren

Urquhart, Anita (1957-)
Anita Urquhart was a member of the 1975 *Core Group,* participating in works such as *The Street* and *Five Concert Pieces*. The girlfriend of Howard Tong and the only one who hadn't gone to art school, no-one is quite sure what to say about Anita. Miranda Payne recalls she and Howard lived in a flat with hessian covered walls and a cat who climbed them; Anthony Howell remembers she was beautiful. Others implied she was a bit out of her league, not interested in debates about structure. Married to Tong for a while, Urquhart went on to St. Martin's School of Art and now designs lingerie.



Photo of Anita Urquhart, nd, courtesy of Howard Tong


SB
MC
Ed M
MG
The Theatre of Mista kes
perform

2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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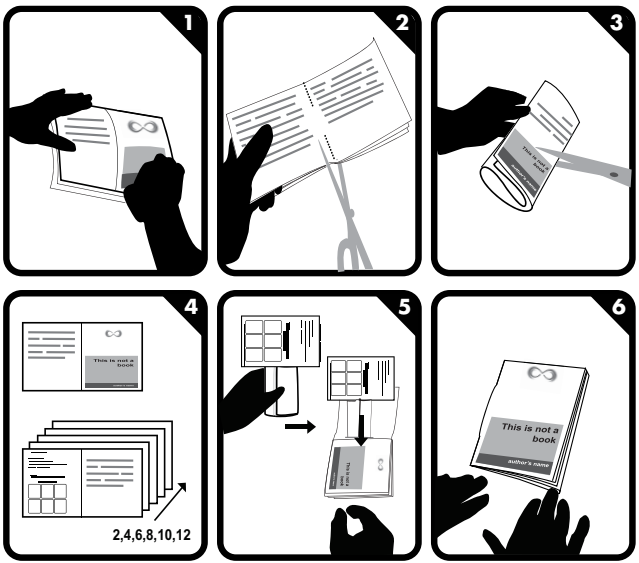


DIFFUSION



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – V, W, X, Y & Z

Marie-Anne Mancio

Venues

Viewpoint

Walks from Day to Night

Wallpaper

Waterfall

Welch, Amanda
Welch, John

Why do it?

Wilkinson, Caroline

Winslow, Kirk

Women

Workshops

X6

You

Z

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an A-Z

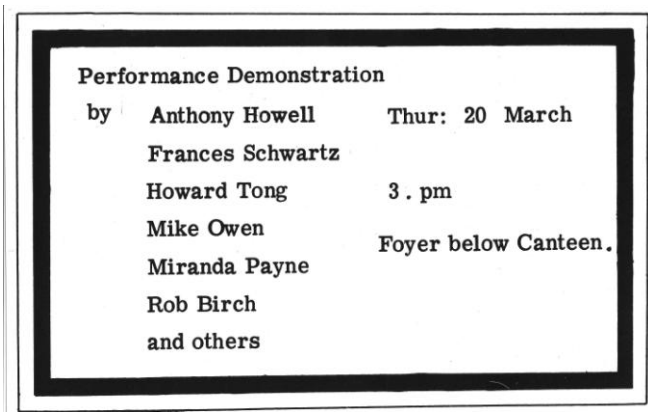
V-Z

Marie-Anne Mancio

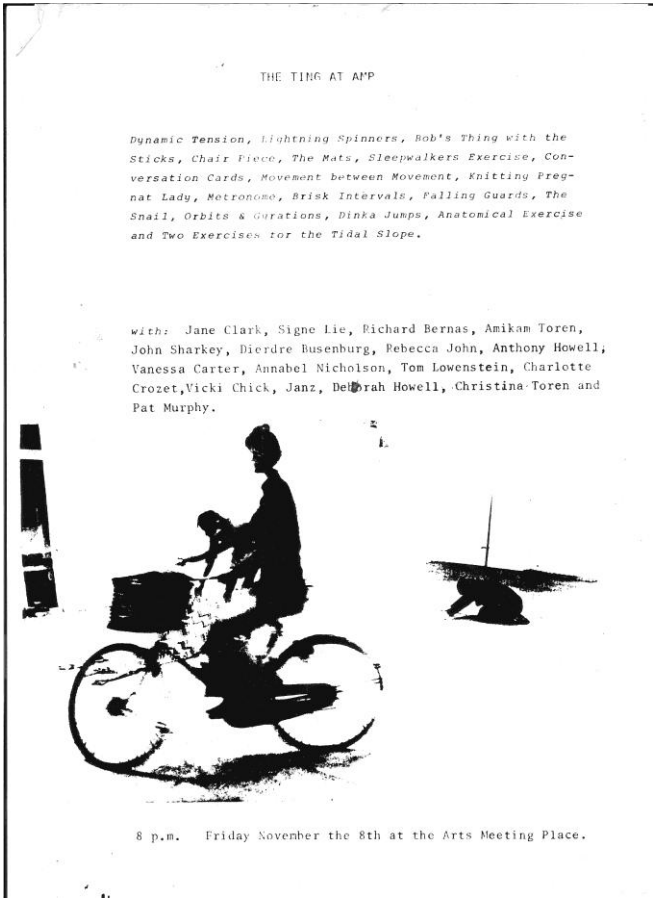
Venues

See also: Art School, Ascham Street, Hartley Witney, Purdies farm

Acme gallery, Arnolfini (Bristol); Artists Meeting Place (Earlham Street, London); Burlington Arcade (London); Corn Exchange, (Cambridge); Dairy, (London); Forum fur Actuelle Kunst, (Innsbruck); FIAC, Galerie Farideh Cadot, Grand Palais, (Paris); Hayward Gallery Sculpture Court, (London); Hampstead Heath, (London); Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre, (London); Mickery Theater, (Amsterdam); Musee d'Art Moderne, (Paris); Paula Cooper gallery, (New York); Roundhouse, (London); Salle Polyvalente, (Ferrara); Serpentine, (London); State Penitentiary and University of Pittsburgh; Stedelijk (Amsterdam), Student Cultural Centre, (Belgrade); Theater for the New City, (New York); Under the Arches, (London); University Theatre Festival, (Brescia)



Notice probably for performance at Maidstone College, nd
Courtesy Howard Tong

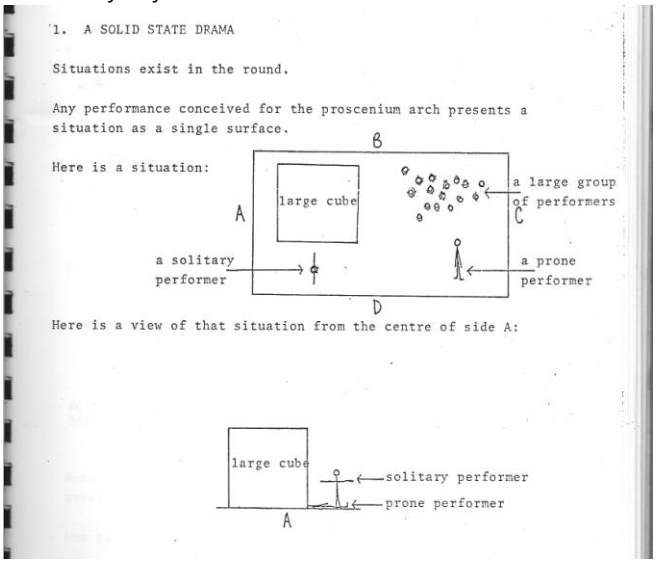


Flyer, The Ting, 1974
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Viewpoint

See also: Purdies, *Summer Pieces*, *Wallpaper*

The removal of the proscenium arch is something discussed in *Elements of Performance Art*:



1. A SOLID STATE DRAMA

Situations exist in the round.

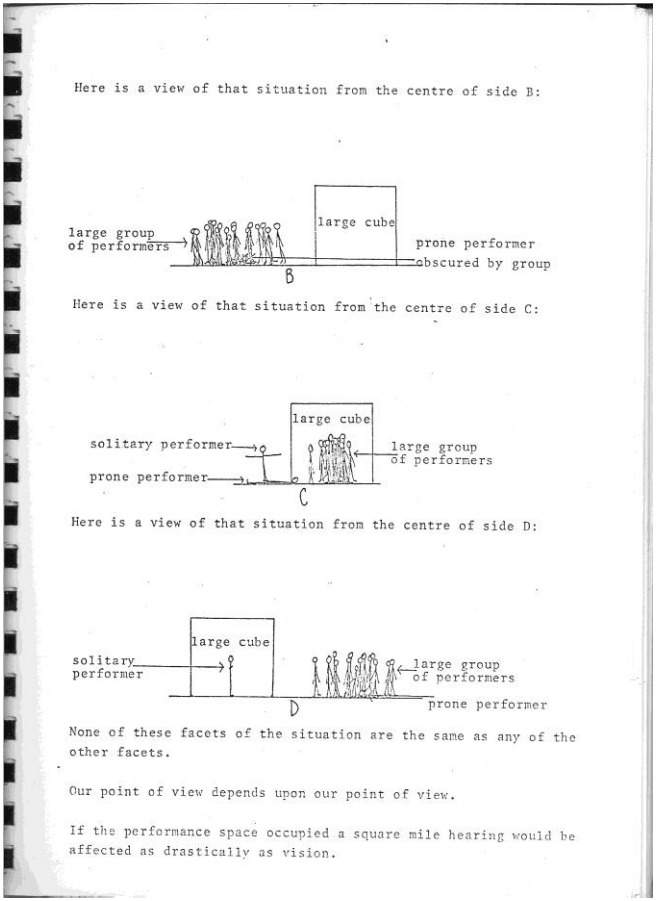
Any performance conceived for the proscenium arch presents a situation as a single surface.

Here is a situation:

Here is a view of that situation from the centre of side A:

©The Theatre of Mistakes

Anthony Howell compared the set-up of *Waterfall 3* to an Italian piazza, encouraging the audience to change sides and so alter their viewpoint. Although the work had a 'show' side, other angles (including viewing from a gallery above) were perhaps as engaging. *Cf* The sculptural works of Susan Bonvin (Eden) such as *Device for Looking at Landscape.* She said: "I'd made a kind of model… the idea is it's taking you out to a circular horizon," and her subsequent experiments.



Here is a view of that situation from the centre of side B:

Here is a view of that situation from the centre of side C:

Here is a view of that situation from the centre of side D:

None of these facets of the situation are the same as any of the other facets.

Our point of view depends upon our point of view.

If the performance space occupied a square mile hearing would be affected as drastically as vision.

And Andrew Eden who did "a whole series about dividing up a space by what you can see… so If you view these boxes from one angle they're all yellow, and then from another angle they're all blue, and then another, they're all white. So you get a different combination of what you're looking at"
(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008)

summer pieces: Susan Bonvin

ALL ROUND VISION

A person stands in the centre of a hypothetical disc that radiat from them at eye level. The furthest distance one can see from any single position indicates the radius of that particular disc of vision. In many cases in an urban locality "all round vision of the circumference of such a disc of vision will be obstructed

I am interested in collecting plans of the obstructed discs of vision that occur from centres chosen at random anywhere and eve where in London.

Enclosed with a page of instructions is a card with a circle printed upon it, it's centre marked with a cross. These are to be distributed via the address lists of art organisations in London, and notices and a supply of cards placed in the foyer of public libraries and galleries. A thousand cards will be printed. Cards returned with completed plans to the address on the page of instructions will be employed in the resolution of this project.

Notices concerning the development of this project will appear in WALLPAPER magazine.

Susan Bonvin's *All Round Vision, Wallpaper's* Summer Pieces, 1975. The Theatre of Mistakes Archive. Amongst the participants who returned cards were Annabel Nicholson and Michael Greenall

Walks from Day to Night (c.1980)

"WALKS FROM DAY TO NIGHT"

"Walks from Day to Night" is a performance for four performers each working with an equal amount of space - a corridor, or walk - and each walk divided into twelve units or "paces". One of these walks crosses three of the others, two cross two of the others, one crosses one of the others. Where their walks cross performers share a pace - and may expect to be impeded by each other.

Dividing up these walks are four free standing doors. One walk passes through two of these doors, two of the walks pass through one door each, one passes through no doors.

The character, actions, purposes of each performer differ from each other by dint of the difference in the number of doors they pass through, and the number of other performers they meet. Further differences begin when a performer opening one door interferes with the progress of a performer in another walk.

The arrangement of the walks is derived from studies of lines of sight in Greek amphitheatres and develops the company's notions of performance cubism by allowing equal amounts of performance in profile, frontview and backview. Recently however, the possibility of tension derived from what is obscured has become as interesting as the suggestion of deeper understanding experienced by what is totally revealed - and the four doors play a counteractive role against the cubistic notion by hiding as many of the actions as are ever seen.

The audience can piece together a drama enacted in a house only through what may be glimpsed from one room: or the converse, they may assess the ramifications of a drama which begins in one room as it starts to affect the entire house.

There will always be four active performers and one performer watching. The ratio will be either three male performers and one female or three female performers and one male - for those on stage. The company consists of Michael Greenall, Anthony Howell, Julian Maynard Smith, Peter Stickland, Miranda Payne, Glenys Johnson and Fiona Templeton. "Walks from Day to Night" will be directed by Anthony Howell.

Specifications: amphitheatre/audience on three sides. Minimum one day's rehearsal on performance space, preferably two. Technical assistance required at rehearsals and performances. Good lighting facilities. Duration approximately 1½ hours. Requires a performance space 28 feet by 28 feet (10 m x 10 m). Transport plus fee subject to all clauses in Notes to Prices. Accommodation for 5 persons.

©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

See also: Notation

Wallpaper

"Dear Anthony,
By virtue of your IBM you seem to be the focal point of Wallpaper..."

Letter from Bill Shepherd - who was initially involved with the magazine but resigned - to Anthony Howell, 27th November 1975
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Wallpaper magazine was published bi-annually in London and New York, sold at a price of £1 or $2.50 and artists were paid £7 for their contributions.
See also: Alan Fuchs, Annabel Nicholson, *Summer Pieces*

Contributing editors: Richard Bernas, Susan Bonvin, David Coxhead, Andrew Eden, Susan Hiller, Anthony Howell, Anthony McCall, Richard Quarrell, Bill Shepherd, Amikam Toren, John Welch.

© remains with the artists & authors, 1975

Interview: Andrew Eden and Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov, 2008:

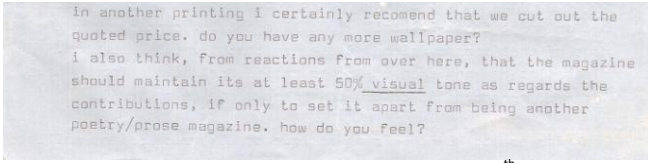
SB: I think *Wallpaper* was really quite influential because it made you have to think…it was actually tempting one into making one's work more conceptual
AE: It was, very
SB: It made you think: I've got these very limited means; I've got three pages; now what am I going to do?

Julia Peyton-Jones and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Interview with Anthony McCall New York, September 2007:

"We started it as a way to get our work out into the world. Each of us was a contributing editor, and each issue would include a piece by five or six of the group. The artists had absolute control over their own pages, so we didn't exercise any editorial control over each other's contributions. So we collaborated to produce the publication but the work within it was our own….

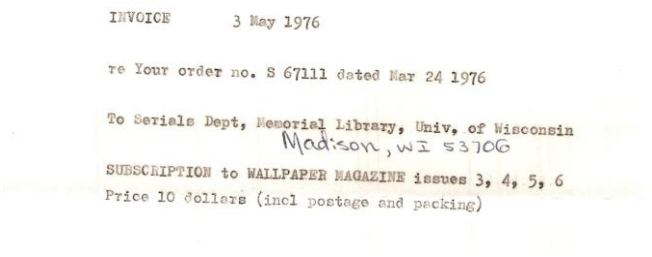
They were cheaply printed in black-and-white and hand stapled and bound in rather extrovert wallpaper, which would usually be bought from the job lot bin in the local wallpaper shop. It was distributed to friends mostly, and sold at a handful of bookshops."

John Welch:
"The covers were wallpaper. Literally. The most garish we could find. The magazine was A4 format with quite basic production values, and the idea was that a different person each time did the work of actually bringing the thing out and we all appeared in it on a strict rota basis. The first issue appeared in 1974 and it ran for seven or maybe eight issues depending on your point of view - by the end things had rather fallen apart. As I remember it, the project was an odd mixture of free-and-easy collaboration and awkward bureaucratic procedures. A transitional moment from the 1960s? But then the sixties were never quite that free-and-easy [....] It was a snapshot of what was going on at the time and the attempt to bring together poets and people in the visual arts seems worthwhile and something often lacking in this country."
('Wallpaper Days' http://johnwelch.blogspot.com/, 21st February 2008)



in another printing I certainly recomend that we cut out the quoted price. do you have any more wallpaper?
i also think, from reactions from over here, that the magazine should maintain its at least 50% visual tone as regards the contributions, if only to set it apart from being another poetry/prose magazine. how do you feel?

Extract letter from Richard Quarrell to Anthony Howell 10th September 1974, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



INVOICE 3 May 1976

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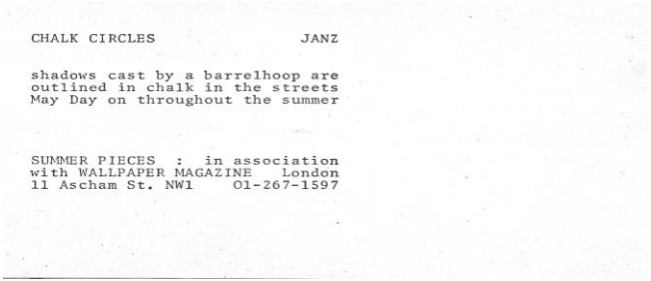
Madison, WI 53706

SUBSCRIPTION to WALLPAPER MAGAZINE issues 3, 4, 5, 6
Price 10 dollars (incl postage and packing)

Invoice to the University of Wisconsin for subscription to *Wallpaper*
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

There is no connection between this magazine and the newer UK *Wallpaper* fashion/lifestyle magazine other than the name which, I suspect, was stolen.





CHALK CIRCLES JANZ

shadows cast by a barrelhoop are
outlined in chalk in the streets
May Day on throughout the summer

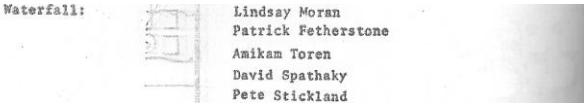
SUMMER PIECES : in association
with WALLPAPER MAGAZINE London
11 Ascham St. NW1 01-267-1597



Card for Robert Janz's *Chalk Circles*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Waterfall (1977)
See also: Diagrams, Hayward Annual, Tea
There are various incarnations from its genesis in *Five Concert Pieces* through to more complex versions in *Two Journeys* .

Performers in 1976 *Two Freedoms*



Waterfall:
Lindsay Moran
Patrick Fetherstone
Amikam Toren
David Spathaky
Pete Stickland



Two Journeys (1976) at the Slade
Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive
Cf Fluxus artist Tomas Schmit *Cycle for Water Buckets* (1962) in which the performer poured water from one container to another until it was all spilt or evaporated.

A WATERFALL

THE THEATRE OF MISTAKES

HAYWARD ANNUAL PART II

20 July to 4 September 1977

Performers and Reserves:

Graham Aspden
Ray Cooper
Janet Davies
Pamela Elias
Alan Fuchs
Louisa Gosling
Michael Greenall
Anthony Howell
Judy Mareden
Julian Maynard-Smith
Lindsay Moran
Miranda Payne
Catherine Seely
Peter Stickland
Fiona Templeton
Claire Warburton
Caroline Wilkinson

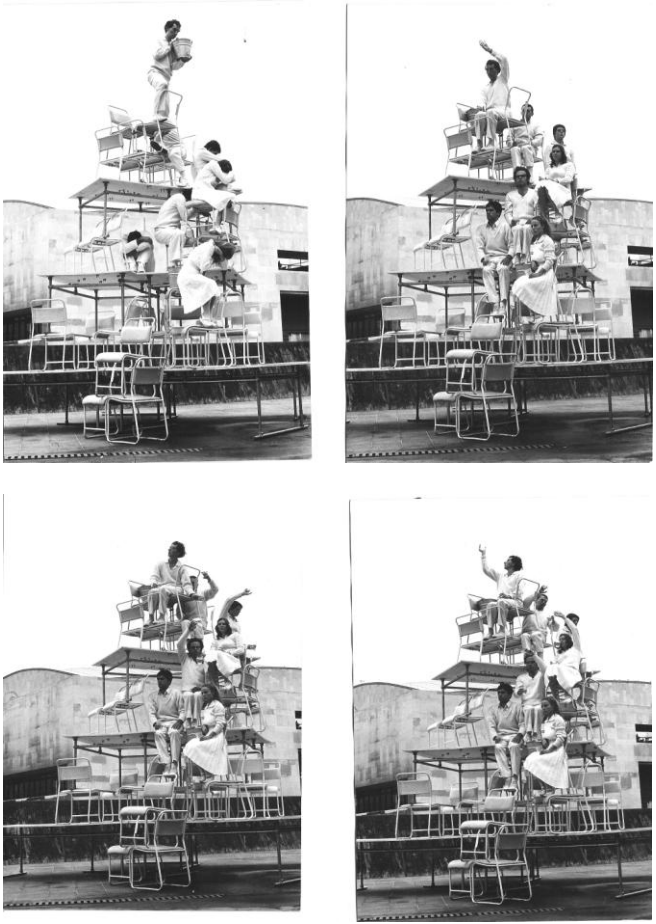
"Going", a performance by The Theatre of Mistakes, can be seen on a videotape made with the aid of the British Council in the documentation section of this exhibition. Slides may also be seen.

"Elements of Performance Art" by Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton, derived from exercises contributed to workshops by performers with The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes, 1974-76. Available from the bookstall, price £5.

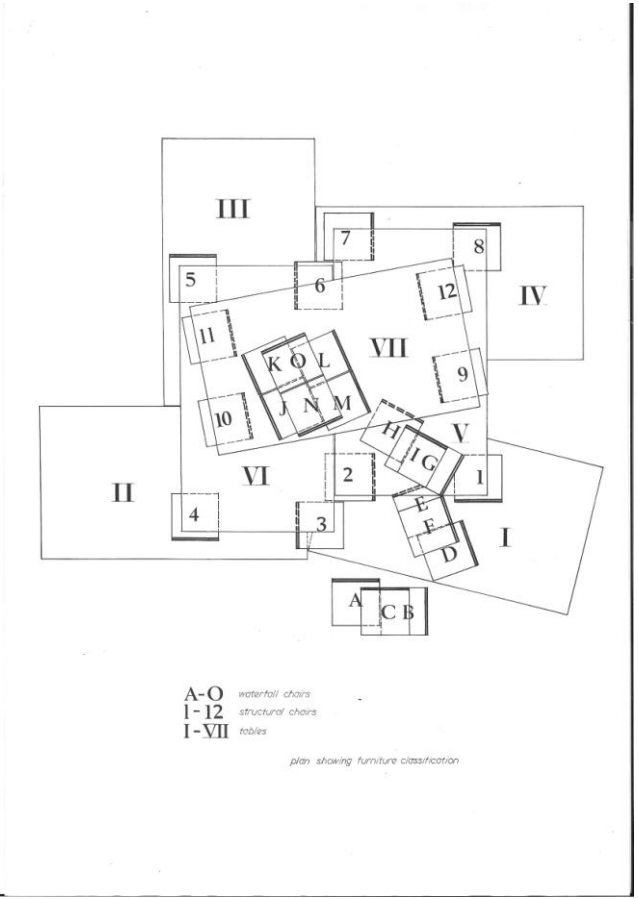
Tables by Kee Klamps - Gascoigne, Gush & Dent (Industrial) Limited

The Theatre of Mistakes
Purdies Farm
Hartley Wintney
Hants
(025 126 2360)

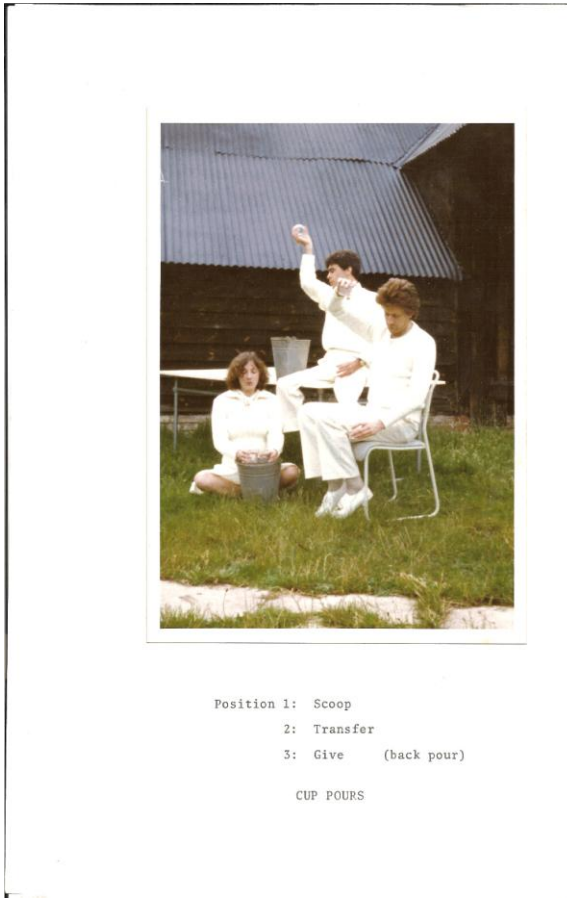
List of performers at Hayward Annual, 1977 In *A Waterfall* comb-bound book, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



The documentation of *Waterfall* is exhaustive, acting almost like time-lapse photography.

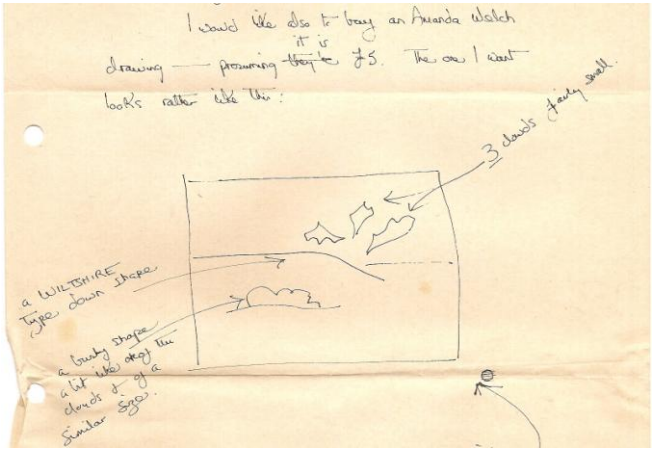


Plan for *Waterfall* ©Peter Stickland



Cascade and Pour, Purdies farm, *nd*
Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Welch, Amanda
Artist, married to John Welch. (See also: Bibliography, Purdies)
Exhibited at the Art Room.



Extract from Letter from Susan Bonvin to Anthony Howell, c. 1976
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Welch, John (1942-)
See also: Bibliography
Poet, editor of poetry magazine *Vanessa.* Welch reviewed Sue [Bonvin] Eden's *Device for Looking at Landscape* at the August Bank Holiday weekend at Purdies in 1974, participated in events such as *Poetry at Ascham Street* (July 1975) with Anthony Howell, Fiona Templeton, John Sharkey, Bill Shepherd, and wrote poems inspired by Ting performances such as *Two Journeys* at the Slade.

PERFORMANCE EXERCISE

They were longing for some relief, having by this time been reborn as statues:

Each photograph as epitaph to their twentieth century adventure.

Each learnt his or her body grammar in the shadow of scholars, and each and every move was this or that.

Each was a very slow runner. It was time to break, and the model heaving her capacious body off the couch carried away the afternoon.

They were all playing statues, as afternoon froze over them. Spectators dropped in like visitors, waving and signalling energetically to one another across the designated territory, which was ruled into squares.

Their bodies were in action against a perfect screen. One was a model gunman. Slowly a sobbing got itself involved with the voices, the furniture, the unborn children.

from THE TING by John Welch: The Second Ting
Covent Garden October 1975

©John Welch

Wilkinson, Caroline
Photographed *Homage to Pietro Longhi* and performed in *A Waterfall* (1977)



Homage to Pietro Longhi at the Serpentine Summer Show

Why do it? Unless you could think of a reason why not to.

Winslow, Kirk See **Photographers**

Women

See also: Mutuality, Southend Green Women's Liberation Group
"Women were central to the development of the Ting. Think of Deborah and Signe Howell. Fiona Templeton, Jane Clark, Wendy Sullivan, Miranda Payne and others.
I think some of these women were feminists, but in retrospect it seems to me that the politics of the Ting were self-referential, always focused on its own internal dynamic and the shifts of power and energy. I have observed this with other performance groups also." (Pat Murphy, response to Questionnaire, December 2008)

PROGRESS TO REVERSE or TIDAL DRAG

One end of the performance space represents masculinity.

Other end represents femininity.

Participants progress from one end to the other of performance space or stage area, changing sex as they go.

Alternate progressions which develop from one stereotype into its opposite with progressions which develop from the imitation of a specific person (known or known of) of one sex into the imitation of a specific person of the other sex.

Extend the progress to deal with the transition from any one to the other of opposing forces or states—such as:

Anger	love
joy	sadness
humour	seriousness
goodness	evil
admiration	envy
etc	

softness	hardness
lengthiness	dumpiness
smoothness	jerks
speed	sloth
Expansiveness	contracting
etc	

The midway point in any progress should always signify a compound of the two values.

Extract from *Preparations for Displacement* manuscript, c. 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive. In referring to "stereotypes", this exercise implies an awareness of gender as construct. ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Workshops

"Interaction exercise," called a female performer and she picked up a large book lying on the table and read from it.

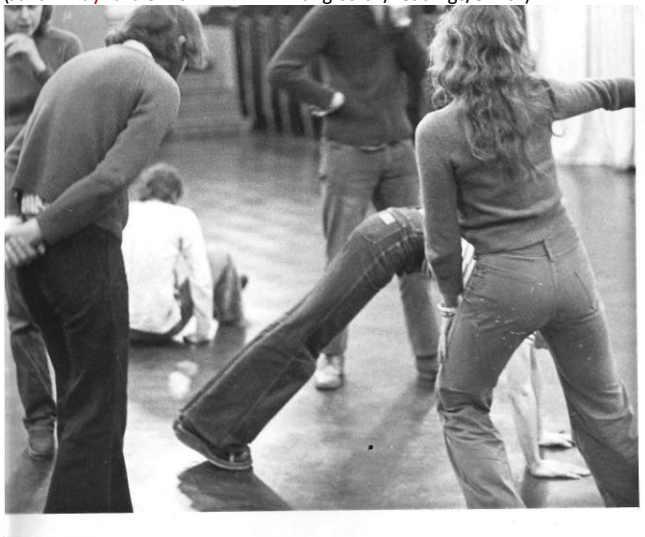
"Using any words and gestures, address someone for thirty seconds. Repeat the activity with other performers until an agreed trigger causes you to stop. We should divide into two groups for this," she said. "Simply freeze when you do not want to continue."

The group divided naturally into two. Most performers started by addressing each other one to one, but a few addressed the side or back of other players. The address was generally in the form of words or actions, but some expressed themselves by action only and some talked without displaying any particular gestures. There was very little consensus about the length of time thirty seconds was and before long it was impossible to recognise any form out of the cacophony of sounds.

(Peter Stickland *Loving* 77books, 2008, 22-3)



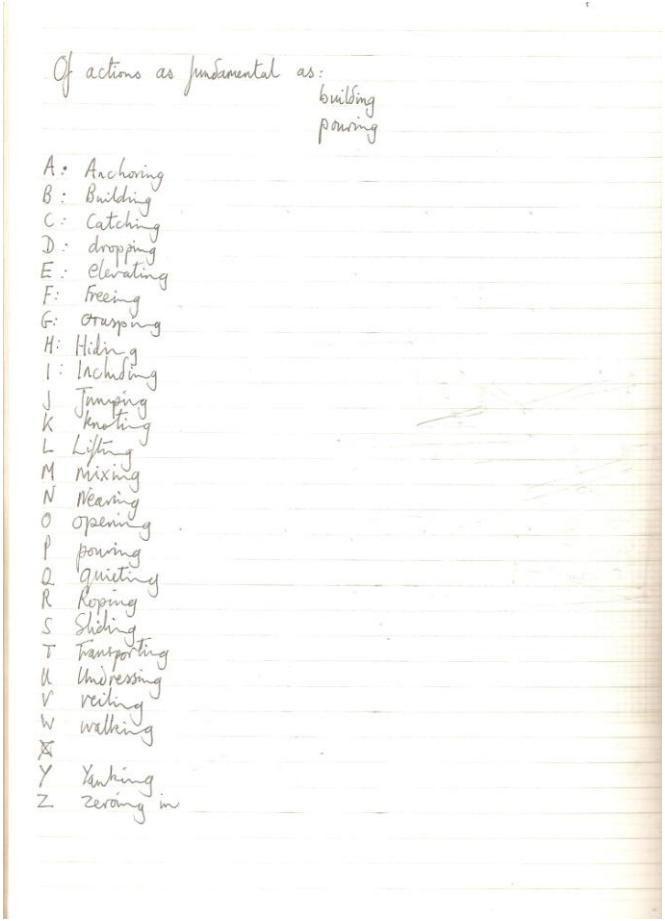
"Fiona Templeton came and did a workshop at my college and there was something about it which intrigued me. I couldn't understand it. To me it was very strange at that point. It used very abstract and minimal rules for action which I found disturbing but physically liberating. We were doing extremely gruelling endurance performances, repeating the same thing over and over for hours on end. It was a sculptural way of dealing with performance. A sculptural way of dealing with bodies in space and time."
(Julian Maynard Smith in www.vizlang.co.uk/readings/Smith)



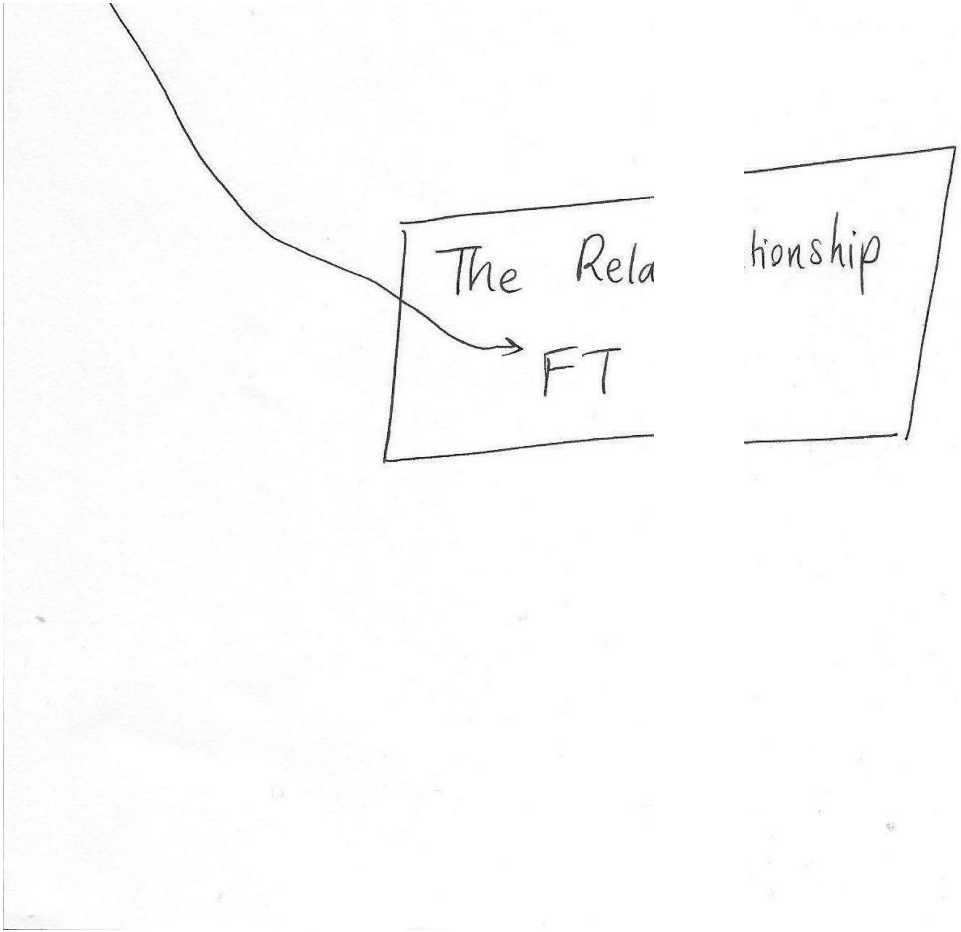
Workshop, Maidstone college led by Anthony Howell in which Howard Tong and Brigitta Roth participated, nd, c. 1974
Photos courtesy of Howard Tong

X6 See **Dance**

You – the reader



Z Page from Notebook of Anthony Howell, nd, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive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2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis
C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009
Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

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