



BrItaInS pErFORMAnCE fESTiVAl

LIVE PERFORMANCE / VIDEO / BANQUET DEBATE / TALKS / INSTALLATIONS / CABARET / MUSIC / FESTIVAL CLUB

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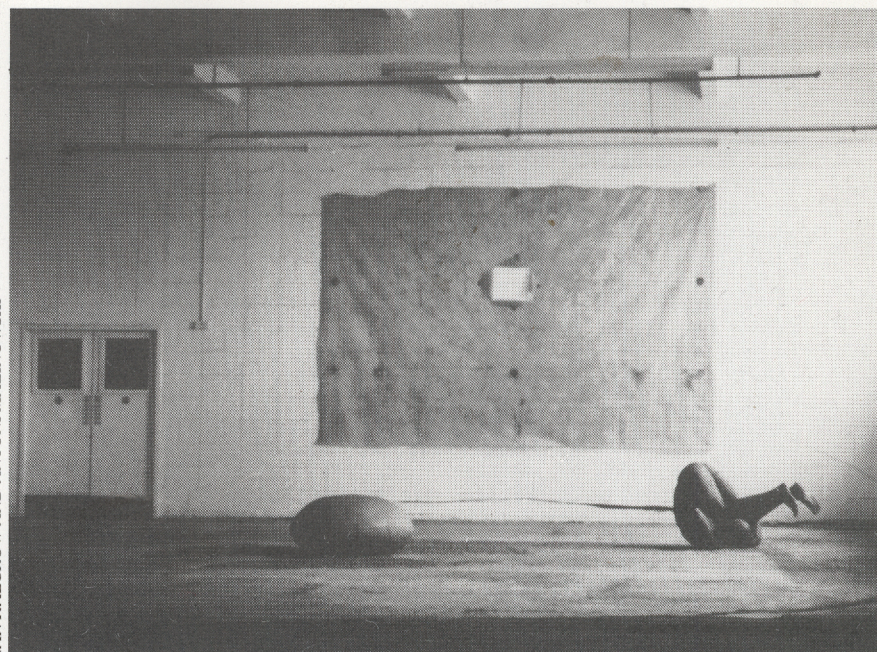
INTRODUCTION

The National Review of Live Art is a solemn name for what has, over the years, been one of the chanciest and most extraordinary events in the experimental arts.

It comes out of a field that is just as unsatisfactorily named. Performance art, visual theatre, new theatre — what you will — exists at the crossroads of other art forms, where music meets the visual arts and theatre coincides with dance. Because of its multiple roots, definitions are of only limited value. After all, the variety of practitioners coming from different directions tend to redefine their areas. There is little common ground for instance between a politically or issue-based performer like Sarah-Jane Edge and the conceptual explorations of Silvia Ziranek, between the glittering recreations of language of Ralf Ralf and Forced Entertainment's spare, harsh, elliptical dramas.

The diversity is one of the strengths of the field. No other performance field offers such a degree of potential autonomy, such a freedom from precedents or preconceptions. Performance art can make time expand or contract. Last year's Review had Shaun Caton slowly creating an alternative world out of objects discovered on nearby streets over the full five days of the festival. It also had short sketches of ideas that left you with a single reverberating image: David Coxon's piece, for instance, that was performed in darkness with a few sharp beams of light catching the changing swirls of smoke apparently emanating from Coxon's moving finger-tips; Annie Griffin's ruminations on the oppressive history of Blackbeard the pirate. Attitudes toward audiences differ. 'I don't know and I don't care [about the nature of the audience]. I just want to do it for anyone. From anywhere. Fuck the money. Fuck "What they want." Never Ever Justify', said Andy Walker of Large Scale International in a recent Performance magazine. Stephen Taylor Woodrow, on the other hand, targetted his audience carefully for 'Living Paintings'. 'We did set out to work in places like the Outer Hebrides and Guernsey, where we could introduce the medium as well as the work itself.'

Hardware and software might or might not be used. Hidden Grin interacted effectively in an earlier year with banks and banks of video monitors, using them to explore the act of observation, from surveillance to a search for knowledge. A few years back Review performers leant heavily on mechanical aids — film,



IAN HALCROW AND ANTONI MALINOWSKI

video, doctored tape — until some got quite lost under paraphernalia. Last year simplicity reigned again with more closely defined images and a less careless attitude towards technology.

The point about the National Review of Live Art is that it provides the chance for such an overview. It is only the first of the event's strengths.

It began, under the initial direction of Steve Rogers, in 1981 at Nottingham's Midland Group. It has since then developed in shape, length and character of content, but its constant core and essential *raison d'être* has been the platform it offers to new and unknown performers. Till 1984, they were chosen from written applications — a hit and miss method that partly resulted in an unevenness of work. Since then a series of regional platforms have provided material from which the event's director for the past four years, Nikki Milican, has chosen the final programme.

The benefits of the Review are multiple. Firstly, it brings together a range of work being done nationally. It raises the profile of performance art and, given the general inviting air of festival, encourages people who've been put off by one of performance art's less attractive qualities — its cliqueness — to try it out. Secondly, the range of work — groups and solo pieces, invited professionals to new performers, international and local work — is a potential source of cross-fertilisation. And the fact of an annual Review has been a valuable device for generating activity around the year as well as focusing creative attention.

The review's seven years at Nottingham (where it was originally called the Performance Art Platform) had a character that any other venue will be hard put to match. For a week the arts centre was given over totally to performance art: in the cinema and the gallery, in the studio, theatre and bar. Even the rooftops shook with activity: Halifax's Babel built an environment there last year, a naked Robert Ayres abseiled down it three years ago. The bar was always full (once the Midland Group had acquired that facility), the stairs were chock-a-block with people either waiting for one of the day's dozen or so events and just simple crashing out with bemusement and exhaustion of the imagination. From midday to midnight and later (Rose English held her audience till 1am some years back), performance art was dominant.

That particular intensity created its own adrenalin and also quickly established a common language that sloughed off the superficial shock of the new. It invited the audacious and the searching, though — in the nature of things — it did not always get them. What the Review has provided however has been an invaluable mixture of seedbed and forcing ground. In conjunction with useful Arts Council schemes and the work of other centres, it has been a major force in the development of this capricious, unpredictable and rich art form. Now on the road, away from its Nottingham roots, long may it grow and prosper.

Naseem Khan

JANUSZ SZCZEREK
"OPEN THE BOX"

Born Poland 1954. Studied at the Polish Film School at Lodz.

In April 1987, two days after the visit of British Prime Minister to the Soviet Union, on an ordinary week day. The television news was recorded in the two super powers: the USA, USSR and their allied countries, England and Poland. The television news which symbolically unites the world in real terms reflects the post war identification of the ideological divide between 'EAST-WEST'.

**ZOE REDMAN &
FRANCES ALEXANDER**
**"THE ROOM OF CLOCKS
(OUT OF SYNC RHYTHMS)"**

Studied Fine Art at Coventry Polytechnic; presently teaches at Humber-side College of Higher Education. Francis Alexander studied at North East London Polytechnic at the School for Independent Study.

To think of the dream in relation to memory and how dreams can be subconscious memories of past thoughts and events. Memory viewed as a mythology rather than nostalgia, as a tale in a world that is not explained by logic alone. Drawing its vital forces from the persistent human trait of using poetry, however illogical and unscientific, as a way of knowing nature, history and society.

"THE ROOM OF CLOCKS: OUT OF SYNC RHYTHMS" is an attempt to bring together that which is material and visible and the dreamworld which is considered immaterial and unimportant.

Throughout Festival
MARION URCH
"OUT OF THE ASHES"

Studied at Brighton Polytechnic; RCA. At present is part time lecturer Gwent College of Further Education, and LVA distribution worker.

This work explores the way in which fire mythology has changed throughout history to reflect the ideologies of the time. I am particularly interested in the way perceptions of women and women's sexuality are fundamental to this history. The piece is like a contemporary creation myth which grows from a reverie whilst gazing into a fire. It is a cyclical piece which travels through the ideas about women which are projections of patriarchal fear towards a celebration of women's laughter, intuition and sexuality.

PICTORIAL HEROES
"THE GREAT DIVIDE"

Pictorial Heroes are Doug Aubrey, Alan Robertson. Both studied at Maidstone College of Art and are now living in Dundee.

The work is concerned with the idea of barriers, and of physical, cultural, geographical and semantic divisions. For some, those featured are means of protection, yet for others they are the basis of an order that restricts, alienates and destroys.

SIMON ROBERTSHAW/MIKE JONES
**"SOCIAL GAMES & GROUP
DANCES"**

Simon Robertshaw: Studied at Wolverhampton Polytechnic; RCA.

Mike Jones: Studied at Trent Polytechnic; Currently programmer/organiser of Acton Screen Independent Video Screening.

Types of social intervention, gestural movements and body postures. Personal space invaded. Actions that are associated that might be considered stereotypically British. The late 80s phenomena of young highly paid worker. A character who has already become a part of the advertiser's vocabulary.

STEPHEN LITTMAN
**"STREETLIFE — SOMETHING OF
THE PRESENT"**

Studied at Coventry Polytechnic; RCA; Brighton Video Fellowship; Part-time lecturer at Maidstone College of Art; Video Director making Arts and Educational programmes.

To me video is immediate. There is no delay to playback the recorded image or information. It has real social meaning for those who use it. The TV age is here from broadcast to domestic users. It is used like photographs by those who can afford to purchase the hardware, the power, the control of the past. You can take it everywhere: holidays, work, weddings etc. All this past being played back in the present, manipulating, re-examining the past to make it fit better. We all take in second-hand information from the blue corner. It tells us all what to buy it tells us stories to be consumed and forgotten from our daily lives. Video images on the news are real, whether you can trust what you see and hear, but that's a completely different matter . . .

CATHERINE ELWES
"FIRST HOUSE"

RCA; Co-curator Woman's Images of Men and About Time at the ICA 1980.

The installation plays with the illusion of space within the frame of the monitor and the gallery. What was previously inside is now outside and vice versa. This serves to emphasise the voyeurism of the spectator, which in turn underlines the exclusivity of the early mother-child relationship.

SIMON HERBERT
"TOTEM"

Studied at Newcastle Polytechnic; Presently works for Projects UK

'When I was a young boy I saw a family of four drown when their car stalled on a jetty and rolled back into a river. The image of the father, panic-stricken and fearful, remains frozen and tangible in my subconscious, yet when recounted to a second party, where is the proof that validates the experience as strongly as the grain of frozen silver halide-crystals?'

CHRIS ROWLANDS
"HOME ON THE RANGE"

Studied at Maidstone School of Art; Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art; Arts Council student prize-winner.

The work is based on a domestic shooting gallery. Vases, plates, plastic ducks, ornaments are animated/fired at across the screens. The viewer is placed in the position of the gunfirer.

THE BANQUET DEBATE

SILVIA ZIRANEK "HUNGER FEEDS THOUGHT OR"

Friday 9 October 8.30pm

THE BANQUET DEBATE
"HUNGER FEEDS THOUGHT OR"
 catering by **SILVIA ZIRANEK**

'I TEND TO EAT I THINK IT'S GOOD: A SHOE'S FOR FEET, A MOUTH'S FOR MOOD FOR FOOD FOR STIMULATION — SPARE THE PLODDING BITE BUT SPOIL THE HOTPLATE — I GAVE UP BLOOD FOR OTHER PLUNDER. AN ASSORTED PLATTER OF (EDIBLE) DISHES SANS VIANDES, OEUF, POISSON TO EXCITE AND SATISFY THE JADED PALATE OF TODAY, SO VAY VAY BLASÉ WITH DOGBURGER AND

DECALORIFICATION'

Non meat fish and egg banquet
 Haute cuisinerama in a marquee
 Bring a wrap

Credits: Coiffure by Allan and Geddy at
 Toni and Guy

With Guest Speaker, Dutch Artist
FRANKLIN AALDERS

'The Artist as Interventionist
 Provocation and presence in a public
 context'

Live Art can make great demands on an audience. It can be about shock — intervention — imposition — risk. It often challenges prejudice — stereotype —

complacency. It is about invention — experiment — chance

Is provocation, more direct presentation, more effective in penetrating a malaise and banality in modernism (art) and consumerism (life) and inspiring by sheer strength of presence, a renewed confidence and concern for contemporary art?

ALASTAIR SNOW
 with **"THE GUERRILLA SQUAD"**

A remarkable concept in concussed percussion, sparked by the tactics of confrontation and deterrent in an uncertain age of reason.

