

where and it is tuned to interpersonal relations by means of the body rather than to spatial relations seen abstractly. Thus Australian artists share many of the attitudes of their Japanese and Californian colleagues — the same emphasis on assemblage and construction materials, as previously in poor art, the same narrative progress, as formerly in funk and body art.

As well as in the artists already mentioned, I noticed a substantial similarity between the ironically folkish works of John Armstrong, Les Kossatz, Michael Nicholson, Tony Cleing and Robert Arneson, who might be described as typically Australian, and the works of Californians Ant Farm, Mark di Suvero, Robert Kinmont, Michael McMillen and Philip Pasquini. If you look at the far better-known art and events of Lynda Benglis and Les Levine — much admired here — you will also be able to understand the mature sensitivity that guides Australian art which, conversely, has remained refractory, at any rate so far, to American minimal art (represented here by Robert Grosvenor) and to land art (absent from the show), despite the immense space of a half-empty continent. The similarities to Japanese and Korean artists are less evident, apart from an apparent convergence on experimental sculpture, with two first-rate exponents in the sparkling Fuijko Nakaya and in Kenij Togami. Among the Australians one does not note, for example, that love for technological media which the Japanese by now use daily.

Even the privileged attention paid to sculpture may in part be due to the sway of physical over metaphysical culture, but it is certainly on the other hand favoured by the strong feeling of sociality which artists here practise in their works and teaching, through the numerous schools and the large number of provincial museums with which the state of Victoria, and its capital Melbourne, are particularly well endowed.

A love for sculpture urged Franco Belgiorno-Nettis, an Italian who in fifteen years has built up a big metal construction company, to become patron first of the Transfield Art Prizes and later, in 1973, of the first Biennale of Sydney. Thomas McCullough, who was in charge of the Biennale this year, directs the Mildura Arts Centre, a provincial museum reserved for sculpture which organizes a triennale for Australian sculptors. In Sydney an association of sculptors has set up a Sculptural Centre of its own, at present directed by our extremely active fellow-countrywoman Giulia Crespi, who promotes meetings and debates on this specific art sector. In short, if in the 'forties it was painting that gave Australia its first 'school', the leadership of Australian art has now passed to sculpture. □

## Peter Kennedy

**1971 'But the Fierce Blackman'.** 'But the Fierce Blackman' was a ritual, a ceremony, which achieved a level of personification through the regular performances given by the artist. The apparent irrational nature of the performances was reinforced by the alogical nature of the context in which the performances took place. Over a period of three weeks the exhibition developed its own peculiar rationale. 'But the Fierce Blackman' was a sound environment comprising a number of levels of aural activity. The phrase 'But the Fierce Blackman', a two track tape loop, played continuously throughout the exhibition, achieving the form of an incantation through relentless repetition. Highly amplified static caused by an electric fan and emanating from a television set was deployed through speakers located in various positions within the gallery. The external aural environment was brought into accord with the existing conditions through the frequent interjection of radio calls from taxi cabs operating in the neighbourhood. At thirty minute intervals Peter Kennedy would commence repeating the phrase 'But the Fierce Blackman' into a microphone. The sense of ritual was accentuated by the bizarre nature of the performances. The actual enunciation of the phrase underwent various changes in accordance with the kind of physical stress the artist applied to his body. Each performance was discontinued at the point when the stress became intolerable. Visitors to the exhibition participated in a similar way, modifying their performance in accordance with their emotional response to the environment.

**1972 'Pelvis Tape'.** 'Pelvis Tape' evolved from an increasing concern with participation art work which prescribed a specified or coherent group of participants as opposed to the random or fortuitous type of participants that such works generally have. The inscription on the photographs reads 'Pelvis as percussive instrument; for projected inclusion in rock n' roll bands following refinement for standardisation as musical instrument. The process involved in introducing this 'instrument' into the lineup of a rock band, through the mutual collaboration of band and artist, will constitute the full realisation of the work'. The intention of the piece was not so much the successful outcome of such an enterprise in terms of its stated intention but the postulation of a model supported by the social organisational capabilities of language. However an irreconcilable difficulty resided in the

fact that there was a disproportionate domination of the possible art model by the social model. Other pieces done during that time operated in contradistinction to the traditional role of the empathy inducing art-work. Gradually the social implications for art-work which stimulated increased selfawareness became more apparent.

**1973, Other than Arts Sake,** a 16 MM documentary film. This film was made whilst travelling during 1973 and early 1974. It has eight different sequences. Each sequence deals with a particular artists work, or, in the case of two sequences, with an attitude or ideology which happens to be consistent with the film's line of explication. Those appearing in the film are; in England David Medalla, Steve Willats, Ian Breakwell and Beau Geste Press. In the U.S.A. Adrian Piper, Hans Haacke, Charles Simonds and the Woman's Building (interviews with Judy Chicago and Arlene Raven). Locations were London, Edinburgh, Devon, New York City, and Los Angeles. The film proposes an alternative to the Formalist tradition. It develops a thesis or rationale for an art-model constructed on the implications of the artist referring to an audience other than the standard art audience. The film shows various methods adopted by artists whose work addresses an audience which does not normally attend to art. Other sequences demonstrate the possibilities open to art which addresses particular social issues. In fact, all of the art works presented in the film derive from a social consciousness. In this regard the film proposes an alternative model for art, a model supported by an esthetic which incorporates socially relevant criteria.

**1974-76 Introductions.** This project is a personal attempt to reconcile some of the issues elucidated in the documentary film 'Other than Arts Sake'. The project functions outside arts normal area of referral. In so doing it addresses itself to an audience which doesn't have a high or intensive level of art experience. The audience comprises members of four clubs. The clubs were selected for their coherence as groups of people, as well as for the range of demographic backgrounds which they represent. A hot-dog club, a marching girls club, an embroidery guild and a bushwalking club are the four participating groups. Representations are being constructed of club members relationships to their fellow members as well as their relationship to their respective clubs, and their club's relationship to the community. Construction of these representations has proceeded from the answering of a questionnaire to video taped interviews. Developing from the purely factual accounts of members self perceptions and the nature of their perception of their clubs are idealized representations of those same perceptions. As it is the club mem-

bers who constitute the audience then it will be their idealized representations which will constitute the art works. In some respects this methodology is related to conventional art practice in that conventional art practice has always sought to produce idealized representations of one kind or another, be it the idealized representation of a person, a bowl of fruit, or, possibly, the artist's innermost feelings as developed in abstract expressionism. These idealized representations, realized in 16 MM colour film, will utilize the structure inherent to television commercials. The choice of this particular method of presentation stems from the fact that unlike 'high art' where a highly refined encoding facility is required for comprehension of the work, a more universally developed facility to 'read' has emerged in relation to the television commercial structure.

As the project is an on-going project, continuing well into 1976, aspects of its development will be presented in the form of small exhibitions in the locations in which the clubs actually function. This is important for two reasons. Firstly the material comprising the exhibition will be located in the cultural context (outer suburbs as opposed to inner city) from which it derived. Secondly, such a contextualised form of presentation will have tangible benefits for the respective clubs. The exhibitions will function in the area of providing information of the club's activity to the extent that people viewing the material, and who are interested in the activities of a particular club, may, on the basis of what is presented, wish to join that club. At the completion of the project there will be a simultaneous presentation of all four groups which will articulate the development of the idealized representations from the initial factual accounts through to their final form. The presentation will incorporate video tape documentaries, representations in the form of a series of watercolour paintings, and the final, idealized representations in 16 MM colour film. It will demonstrate to us all the methods by which we maintain our social relationships, and how, in endeavouring to believe in our social relevance, we construct idealized representations of that relevance. In so far as this can be demonstrated the project will act as a metaphor for the social realities and aspirations of us all.

## Mike Parr

**Rules & Displacement Activities: Problems of socialization.** The 'Rules & Displacement Activities' project was begun

early in 1973. At the time I write (end of 1976) it consists of two, 16 mm. films (Parts 1 & 2); 40 and 55 minutes duration respectively, with a Part 3 in pre-production to be completed sometime in 1978 (projected length: 55 minutes). Part 1 was shot during concerts of performances at Galerie Impact, Lausanne and Galerie Media, Neuchâtel, Switzerland in May/June 1973. Further material was added as the result of a private, re-performance of many of the same pieces in Sydney in November 1973. Pieces performed included the following:

« Push tacks into your leg until a line of tacks has been made up your leg ».  
« Using sharpened matches, push matches between your teeth, until your mouth is filled with matches ».  
« Sew a line of buttons on your chest. Do up your shirt on the buttons ».  
« Blood unity structure (after Brancusi's 'Endless Column') ».  
« Hold a lighted match in your mouth until the roof of your mouth is burnt ».  
« Slash your wrists and arms. Smear the blood on your face ».  
« Have a branding iron made up with the word 'ARTIST'. Brand this word on your body ».  
« Using a sharp instrument cut around your thigh so that a 'Leg Ring' is made ».  
« Invite members of the audience to drop burning matches on your bare body ».  
« Stuff your nose with bread. Push matches into your nose. Ignite the matches ».  
« Re-open old wounds. Sew up the wounds ».  
« Slash your fingers. Let blood fall on your eyes. Until your eyes are filled with blood ».  
« Pack your armpit with fish. Pour iodine into your armpit ».

As well as these solo-performances, numbers of pieces were also performed with the audience.

Part 2 was begun late in 1975 (completed October 1976), after a year when I worked on scripted material and general structure. Unlike Part 1, Part 2 was produced outside the context of the art world. There were no 'audiences' during filming and my performances were done with friends. From a technical point of view, formal control of the material was improved by the construction of a 'Performance Room' at my home, which consists of moveable white walls (for perspective corrections) and an overhead lighting system (16x500 watt photofloods) bounced from a light shield through a diffusing filter, to provide an even distribution of shadowless light. As a result, we were free to perform without interference from the recording system.

Solo-performances and other activities during Part 2 were at once more tightly scripted and more spontaneous than Part 1. Of the tightly scripted performances, I wanted both my friends, and later the audience, to be quite clear about ideas communicated. The following is an example:

**Integration 1. Leg Line of Blue Sky (1974/1975).**

Make 3, 3inch square photographs of the

blue sky. Each photograph should be taken at the same time, of the same area of blue sky. Include a small area of white cloud in each shot.

Bare your right leg to the upper thigh and using grease paint completely whiten your leg to the edge of your rolled trouser.

Working slowly and evenly, place the first photograph on the outside of your leg about 1inch above your ankle. Staple in place.

Place the second photograph 2inches above the first. Staple in place.

Place the third photograph 2inches above the second. Staple in place.

Perform this piece mechanically.

Do not allow your leg to quiver. Do not cry (a stoical demeanour is important).

Afterwards place the staple gun on the floor and sit perfectly still.

**Technical Instructions:** the performer should be seated on a white chair, to make a right angle between the upper and lower parts of the leg.

Back the piece (background and floor) with a flat, black drop.

Light the piece with soft light from both sides. Organize lighting to eliminate shadows. Frame the piece to include the right-angle of the leg to the edge of the hip.

Camera should be tripod-mounted, and for the duration of the piece there should be no movement of the camera and no variation in framing.

Filming should commence as the performer positions photograph 1, and discontinued as photograph 3 is stapled in place (as the performer replaces the staple gun on the floor and sits still).

A microphone should be located to extract incidental sound.

No editing. Colour. Sync sound. Normal camera speed.

As well as documentation of performances, Part 2 included sections of interview, stills, graphics and complex opticals. The soundtrack was heavily constructed and subtle departures from naturalistic colour and variable timing in the prints were also important.

The ambit for 'Rules & Displacement Activities', the area of concern and its problematic, were pre-figured in an earlier work, called '150 Programmes & Investigations' (1971 & 1972). This work consists of a collection of instructions lettered on cards (in the familiar Fluxus tradition), that are both programmes for myself and suggestions for the reader. They are epiphanies, obsessions, apothegms... 'Key notions' that emerged in the context of my life situation. At the same time as I extrapolated out these notions, I wrote down theoretical observations and quotes that worked as an orientation in more social and political terms. I was trying to see myself not so much as an artist producing within art, but as a person in a social situation first, and as an artist secondly.

Now the limitations of this work seem fairly obvious. In the first instance, the relationships between the levels of intention in the work as a whole; between instructions like:

**Nail your hand to a tree**

« Take up fighting. Fight your fellow man.